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ABSTRACT

This report analyzes attitudinal and situational differences between dropouts and non-dropouts from Ontario's secondary school system. The analysis is based on the results of telephone interviews with 1,400 Ontario residents who attended secondary school in the province and who were between the ages of 18 and 30, 700 of whom dropped out of school before graduation and 700 of whom graduated from high school. Two hundred of the dropouts and 200 of the graduates comprised a special subsample of Franco-Ontarians; data for this subsample is examined separately in the report. The report is divided into 10 sections. Part 1, Introduction, discusses research limitations and describes characteristics of the sample. Part 2 examines family and demographic background. Part 3 looks at the consequences of dropping out in the areas of employment, occupation and income, gender differences in occupation and income, and marital status. Part 4 discusses attitudes toward education. Part 5 looks at the types of schools attended by respondents, the courses they took, and their grades. Part 6 considers the situation and attitudes of dropouts and part 7 looks at the dropouts' later education experiences. Part 8 describes the non-dropouts. Part 9 examines family structure and support. A summary and discussion are included in part 10. (NB)

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A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF DROP-OUTS AND NON DROP-OUTS IN ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOLS

A Report to the *Ontario Study of the Relevance of Education and the Issue of Dropouts*

Student Retention and Transition Series

MICHAEL SULLIVAN,
Decima Research

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I. INTRODUCTION

This report by Decima Research analyses attitudinal and situational differences between drop-outs and non drop-outs from Ontario's secondary school system.

The analysis is based on the results of telephone interviews with 1,400 Ontario residents who attended secondary school in the province and are between the ages of 18 and 30. In all, 700 interviews were carried out with those who left secondary school for whatever reasons prior to graduation and the same number with those who completed their secondary school education. A special subsample was undertaken of Franco-Ontarians -- 200 interviews with drop-outs and 200 interviews with non drop-outs. Consequently, the main Ontario sample consists of 500 each of drop-outs and non drop-outs. In the analysis to follow the Franco-Ontarian sample will be examined separately.

In view of the fact that one of the objectives of the study is to identify any gender based differences relating to drop-outs and non drop-outs, a 50/50 sex quota was applied. While this has the disadvantage of not allowing a gender based incidence of drop-outs to be arrived at, it has the advantage of ensuring that a sufficiently large sample of both sexes is available for analysis; this enables gender based differences to be more easily identified.

A basic issue in the research is, of course, the definition of a drop-out. For purposes of this study, a drop-out is any person who left secondary school for whatever reason prior to graduating. This left open the possibility that a person could have returned and completed his/her secondary education. Since part of the thrust of this study is to measure the extent to which drop-outs actually do return to complete secondary school, this definition allows for this issue to be examined.

In order to identify drop-outs and non drop-outs, we asked all potential respondents a screening question prior to the interview. This question asked:

> During the course of your high school education, did you leave high school, in other words terminate your education, at any time prior to graduating, regardless of whether you later returned?

Those who answered "yes" were administered the drop-out questionnaire. Those who answered "no" were, in addition, asked if they were currently a high school student. If they were, the interview was terminated; if they were not, they were administered the non drop-out questionnaire. This second screening procedure was adopted, because, in large part, it is the outcome of the secondary school experience that is being explored; to include non drop-out high school students would be irrelevant to understanding this issue.

In order to allow for the comparison between drop-outs and non drop-outs, we asked many of the same questions of the two groups. In addition, questions relating to dropping out and to subsequent educational experiences were put to the drop-out group.

The objectives of this research are to identify:

- The long-term financial and employment effects of dropping out;
- The reasons for dropping out;
- The extent to which drop-outs return to school;
- Any variable effects by sex;
- The educational needs and programs that drop-outs desire;
- A communications strategy for getting drop-outs to enter some kind of program;
- Any variable effects by Anglophone and Francophone populations; and
- The effects of part-time student employment on the drop-out phenomenon.

A. Research Limitations

An important caveat to bear in mind with this type of research is the reliance that is necessarily placed on the respondent's ability to recall events of the past. In striving to identify and understand the factors that may have led to decisions to leave high school, the researcher must rely on the ability of the respondent not only to recall accurately events that may have occurred 10 years ago, but also to remember attitudes and feelings of the day as well. For example, it is possible that some respondents incorrectly specified their parents' household income at the time they were in high school or the age at which they dropped out of school.

Besides the limitations of memory, the other major concern with this kind of research is the effect of recent events on recollections of the past. The notion that recent experiences tend to colour people's recall of past events and attitudes is well-documented in the literature.

On the positive side, it is likely that memory error is randomly distributed within the sample and is unlikely to have caused a significant bias in the data. Nonetheless, the reader should bear this limitation in mind and use the findings as indicative of patterns rather than as completely factual information.

B. Characteristics of the Sample

Prior to beginning this analysis, it is important to examine three dimensions that could influence the results. These are region, city size, and age variations between drop-outs and non drop-outs. Differences between the sample of drop-outs and non drop-outs along these dimensions can influence the overall results and need to be taken into account.

The distribution of drop-outs and non drop-outs across the province, as shown in Table 1, indicates that in terms of the province-wide sample the incidence of dropping out tends to be more frequent in southwestern and northern Ontario and is less frequent in the Toronto area.

Table 1

REGIONAL, COMMUNITY SIZE, AND AGE DISTRIBUTION OF DROP-OUTS AND NON DROP-OUTS

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Drop Out %	Non Drop-Out %	Drop Out %	Non Drop-Out %
REGION				
East	13	15	41	43
Central	29	31	0	1
Toronto	16	34	0	0
North	14	5	58	54
Southwest	28	15	0	2
COMMUNITY SIZE				
Less than 10,000	29	12	53	42
10,000 - 99,999	16	10	14	14
100,000 - 999,999	32	33	32	44
1 million or more	24	45	0	0
AGE				
18-19 years	12	9	7	8
20-21 years	13	18	13	19
22-24 years	19	26	18	22
25-27 years	26	20	29	23
28-30 years	30	27	35	28
MEDIAN AGE	25.16	24.18	25.89	24.63

The lower frequency of dropping out in the Toronto area means that when community size differences are considered, drop-outs tend to be more frequently found in the smaller communities across the province (Table 1).

Because Franco-Ontarians live mainly in Eastern and Northern Ontario, their sample was drawn from these areas. As Table 1 suggests, drop-outs are more likely to be found in communities with populations of less than 10,000.

Age variations are also apparent between drop-outs and non drop-outs. Table 1 also shows that the non drop-outs in the sample tend to be slightly younger than the drop-outs. The median age for the drop-out sample across the province overall is 25.16 years, while that of non drop-outs is 24.18 years. For the Franco-Ontarian sample, the median ages are 25.89 and 24.63 for drop-outs and non drop-outs, respectively.

The differences in regional, community size, and age distribution between the drop-outs and non drop-outs sample can have some impact on results; where this is apparent, note will be made in the text of these differences. Where no mention is made, this is because these variations have no impact on the overall results.

II. FAMILY AND DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

A. Family Background

In identifying the causes of dropping out or of staying and completing secondary school, family background is an obvious factor to be examined. As Table 2 makes clear, there are significant differences between drop-outs and non drop-outs in the occupation of fathers and in family income during the time respondents were in high school. Those who did not complete secondary school were more likely to have fathers who were in blue collar occupations and were less likely to be involved in upper level white collar jobs or to be self-employed.

Table 2

FAMILY BACKGROUND OF DROP-OUTS AND NON DROP-OUTS

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %
FATHER'S OCCUPATION				
Professional/technical/ cultural	9	15	3	14
Manager/owner	13	21	6	11
Service	15	12	18	17
Clerical	3	6	0	1
Medium level production	37	29	37	33
Low level production	14	8	8	6
Agriculture	6	5	23	16
MOTHER'S WORK STATUS				
Worked full-time	40	41	25	37
Worked part-time	13	15	10	13
Homemaker	41	41	63	48
FAMILY/HOUSEHOLD INCOME				
Median income	$27,030	$33,180	$20,900	$31,350

This, not surprisingly, translates into drop-outs coming from homes with a lower average household income. Across the province, the overall difference amounts to over $6,000, with non drop-outs reporting a median family income while they were in secondary school of $33,180 and drop-outs reporting a median family income of $27,030. Among Franco-Ontarians, the difference is much greater and amounts to over $10,000, with non drop-outs reporting a median family income of $31,350 and drop-outs $20,900.

Aside from the differences in occupation accounting for family income differences between the families of drop-outs and non drop-outs, the presence of a mother in the labour force can also have a large impact on family income. While this cannot be ruled out as an explanation for family income differences across the province, the fact that, as Table 2 shows, the same proportion of mothers of drop-outs and non drop-outs across the province were in the labour force during the time that respondents were in high school would tend to limit this possibility. Possibly, mothers of non drop-outs had better paying jobs than those of drop-outs, but this would be unlikely to reduce the income gap by a significant amount.

The relative absence of Franco-Ontarian mothers of drop-outs in the labour force, compared with non drop-outs does probably account for some of the much larger difference in household income between the two Franco-Ontarian groups. Even taking this factor into account, however, the income level of families of Franco-Ontarian drop-outs were still well below those of non drop-outs.

B. Other Background Factors

As a society that has traditionally welcomed immigrants, a significant minority of school age children are likely to be from immigrant families. This situation raises the obvious question of the extent to which being an immigrant has an effect on the likelihood of dropping out. When this issue is examined, however, coming to Canada as a child or during school years is not strongly associated with dropping out. In all, 10% of those who dropped out say they were born outside of Canada; nevertheless 12% of non drop-outs were also born outside of Canada.

Ethnic background is also not strongly associated with dropping out. The largest group of drop-outs and non drop-outs give their ethnic origin as British. This is as one would expect, given the substantial proportion of those of British origin in Ontario. The only difference of any note is the slightly higher incidence of those of Mediterranean origin in the ranks of the non drop-outs. Interestingly, there is no difference in the proportion of non drop-outs and drop-outs who are Franco-Ontarians and who were interviewed as a part of the province-wide survey. This suggests that the Franco-Ontarian drop-out rate may not be very different from that of the province overall.

(The lack of an impact of immigration and ethnicity on the likelihood of being a drop-out must, however, be considered a tentative finding. In order to definitively draw these conclusions, we would need to undertake a sample that would not set quotas for drop-outs.)

While the great majority of young people, both drop-outs and non drop-outs, come from homes where both parents are present, Table 3 indicates that the living arrangements of young people while they are attending secondary school is linked, to some extent, to whether or not a young person completes his/her education. Those who come from homes where both parents are present are somewhat more likely to complete high school than are those where a parent is absent.

Table 3

FAMILY LIVING ARRANGEMENTS DURING HIGH SCHOOL OF DROP-OUTS AND NON DROP-OUTS

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %
Respondent and both parents at home	71	83	83	90
Parents divorced - respondent living with mother/father	16	9	10	6
Respondent living with one parent or a relative	5	4	3	4
Living on own/with friend	5	3	4	1

III. CONSEQUENCES OF DROPPING OUT

A. Employment Situation

Although as Table 4 shows, drop-outs are as likely to be in the labour force as non drop-outs, there are some clear consequences of dropping out. To begin with, drop-outs, across the province overall and among Franco-Ontarians are more likely to have been unemployed in the past. In fact, across the province, 49% have been unemployed in the past compared with 38% of non drop-outs. At the same time, among those who have been unemployed, drop-outs are likely to have been unemployed more frequently in the past five years (drop-outs - 1.81 times, non drop-outs - 1.32 times). Drop-outs are also more likely to have spent more time unemployed over the last five years. As Table 4 shows, for the province overall, this amounts to an average of 10.4 months over the last five years, compared with 5.6 months among non drop-outs.

Table 4

EMPLOYMENT SITUATION OF DROP-OUTS AND NON DROP-OUTS

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %
LABOUR FORCE STATUS				
Employed full-time	65	68	60	64
Employed part-time	9	10	12	12
Unemployed/given up looking	10	3	12	4
Homemaker	14	5	14	6
Full-time student	1	13	2	12
Unemployed in past	49	38	54	34
Not unemployed in past	51	62	46	66
LAST TIME UNEMPLOYED				
More than five years ago	28	26	29	19
One to five years ago	45	44	38	35
Within past year	27	29	32	32
Median time unemployed in last five years (months)	10.4	5.6	7.9	4.4
Number of times unemployed in last five years	1.81	1.32	1.55	1.22

The current situation also shows that for drop-outs, both across the province overall and among Franco-Ontarians, although a significant proportion have jobs, the number unemployed is well above the levels for non drop-outs.

The labour force situation of drop-outs and non drop-outs is further clarified when gender differences are considered. As Table 5 makes clear, the apparent lack of distinction between drop-outs and non drop-outs regarding labour force participation conceals major gender based differences between drop-outs and non drop-outs. Male drop-outs are more likely to be full-time in the labour force than are non drop-outs, primarily because a significant minority of non drop-outs report that they are full-time students. Female drop-outs, on the other hand, are much less likely to be in the labour force than are non drop-outs primarily because they are more likely to be homemakers.

Table 5

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN LABOUR FORCE
PARTICIPATION FOR DROP-OUTS AND NON DROP-OUTS

	ONTARIO-WIDE			
	DROP-OUT		NON DROP-OUT	
	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %
Employed full-time	81	49	72	64
Employed part-time	6	11	9	12
Unemployed/given up looking	8	8	2	2
Homemaker	0	29	0	11
Full-time student	2	1	16	10

	FRANCO-ONTARIANS			
	DROP-OUT		NON DROP-OUT	
	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %
Employed full-time	82	39	71	56
Employed part-time	7	17	12	12
Unemployed/given up looking	10	12	7	2
Homemaker	0	28	0	13
Full-time student	1	2	10	15

While homemakers are likely to have children and thus be in a more difficult situation regarding work, the greater tendency of drop-outs to be homemakers compared with non drop-outs may also arise from the fact that being drop-outs they lack the skills to obtain a job that would pay for day care and provide a reasonable income. As a later section will indicate, female drop-outs are somewhat more likely to be married than are female non drop-outs, but the difference in the proportion married is unlikely, on its own, to account for the much greater proportion of drop-outs who are homemakers compared with non drop-outs.

B. Occupation and Income

Just as there are costs in terms of access to the labour force and ability to stay continuously in the labour force arising from dropping out, there are also differences between drop-outs and non drop-outs in terms of current occupation and to some extent the income derived from that occupation.

Table 6 shows that drop-outs are much less likely to be found in professional, technical, and cultural activities. These are traditionally the types of jobs that require fairly high levels of education; however, drop-outs, certainly among the population overall, are as likely as non drop-outs to hold managerial type positions or to be self-employed. Further, drop-outs tend to be more concentrated in low level service occupations, such as cashiers, and in blue collar jobs.

Table 6

OCCUPATION AND INCOME OF DROP-OUTS AND NON DROP-OUTS

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %
OCCUPATION				
Professional/technical/ cultural	3	23	5	17
Manager/owner	9	10	6	10
Medium level service	4	9	6	7
Low level service	24	12	32	26
Medium level office	5	13	2	4
Low level office	9	10	4	13
Medium level production	28	16	25	16
Low level production	16	6	14	5
Agriculture	3	1	6	3
PERSONAL INCOME				
Less than $5,000	21	16	20	23
$5,000 - $9,999	16	10	17	11
$10,000 - $14,999	17	15	18	12
$15,000 - $19,999	15	13	16	12
$20,000 - $24,999	12	17	11	17
$25,000 - $29,999	7	11	7	9
$30,000 - $39,999	9	13	10	8
$40,000 - $49,999	2	4	1	4
$50,000 and over	1	3	2	3
MEDIAN INCOME	$13,888	$18,890	$13,940	$16,350
AVERAGE INCOME	$15,720	$19,490	$15,620	$18,470

The differences in personal income between drop-outs and non drop-outs shown in Table 6 also point out the financial costs involved in dropping out -- and after 30 years of age the difference will become more pronounced. Among Ontario residents overall, non drop-outs' average income is $5,000 more than that of drop-outs, while among Franco-Ontarians the difference amounts to approximately $2,500. The smaller difference among Franco-Ontarians arises from the lower average income of non drop-outs.

These figures change somewhat when the personal incomes of only those with full-time jobs are considered. Table 7 shows the difference between drop-outs and non drop-outs narrows to $4,000 among the Ontario sample and increases to over $3,600 among Franco-Ontarians. Again the cost of dropping out remains significant.

Table 7

AVERAGE INCOME OF THOSE EMPLOYED FULL-TIME

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Drop-Out	Non Drop-Out	Drop-Out	Non Drop-Out
Median personal income	$18,703	$22,705	$18,369	$22,053
Average personal income	$19,910	23,750	$19,850	$23,030

Although a detailed analysis of income for each occupational category shown earlier in Table 6 is not possible because of the small cell sizes of some of the occupations, and therefore cannot be definitive, an examination of these categories reveals that the differences between drop-outs' and non drop-outs' income is fairly small for service, office, and production jobs, but is substantial for professional, technical, self-employed, and managerial occupations. Presumably, many jobs in production work are unionized and therefore wage scales are set by job class and this would help to level incomes of drop-outs and non drop-outs. In low level service and low level office work, minimum wages are often paid and this would also have a levelling effect on the wages of drop-outs and non drop-outs.

Although the data tentatively support that there may be only limited income differences for low level office and service work and for production work, it will be recalled from Table 6 that comparatively few non drop-outs were found in these positions, and more were in the upper level white collar occupations. Thus, even if income differences in lower level jobs between drop-outs and non drop-outs were limited, non drop-outs would still have higher average incomes because more of them were found in the higher paying jobs.

C. Gender Differences in Occupation and Income

In addition to occupation and income differences between drop-outs and non drop-outs, there are also gender based differences. Table 8 shows that while neither male nor female drop-outs in the Ontario-wide sample are likely to be in professional positions, females are more likely to be found in low level service positions and, to some extent, low level office work, and males in medium level production jobs.

Non drop-outs, on the other hand, both male and female, are more likely to be found in professional and technical positions.

Interestingly, non drop-out females are found strongly represented in almost all occupational categories, with the exception of production work and agriculture. The implication here is that drop-outs, especially females, are more likely than non drop-outs to be "ghettoized" into a few types of jobs. The Franco-Ontarian sample also tends to support this point of view, since over half of the female drop-outs are found in low level service positions.

Table 8

GENDER DIFFERENCES BETWEEN OCCUPATION AND PERSONAL INCOME AMONG DROP-OUTS AND NON DROP-OUTS

	ONTARIO-WIDE			
	Drop-out		Non drop-out	
	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %
OCCUPATION				
Professional/technical	4	3	25	20
Self-employed/manager	10	7	12	7
Medium level service	2	7	5	12
Low level service	14	38	11	15
Medium level office	3	7	7	19
Low level office	2	18	2	19
Medium level production	42	7	25	5
Low level production	19	11	9	2
Agriculture	4	1	2	1
PERSONAL INCOME FOR FULL-TIME WORKERS ONLY				
Median	$21,000	$15,227	$25,714	$20,305
Average	$22,200	$15,970	$26,220	$20,880
PERSONAL INCOME FOR TOTAL SAMPLE				
Median	$18,684	$8,842	$21,212	$16,838
Average	$20,130	$11,330	$21,410	$17,500

Table 8 -- Continued

	FRANCO-ONTARIANS			
	Drop-out		Non drop-out	
	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %
OCCUPATION				
Professional/technical	3	7	16	18
Self-employed/manager	6	6	11	9
Medium level service	6	6	2	13
Low level service	20	53	25	28
Medium level office	0	6	6	2
Low level office	2	7	2	25
Medium level production	39	2	26	3
Low level production	18	9	6	3
Agriculture	6	6	5	0
PERSONAL INCOME FOR FULL-TIME WORKERS ONLY:				
Median	$21,607	$13,214	$23,928	$20,178
Average	$22,690	$13,950	$25,860	$19,290
PERSONAL INCOME FOR TOTAL SAMPLE:				
Median	$19,347	$ 8,804	$19,464	$12,000
Average	$20,630	$10,460	$21,190	$13,510

The predominance of female drop-outs in certain types of low level occupations probably accounts for the lower average personal income that full-time labour force participants receive compared with non drop-outs. Similarly, the greater concentration of male non drop-outs in professional positions also accounts for the difference in full-time income between male drop-outs and non drop-outs.

The second average income figure displayed in Table 8 is the total average income for each category, not just those in the labour force, and a sharp drop in the average income of female drop-outs compared with non drop-outs is apparent when the average income of those in the labour force is compared with the total average income of each category. The point to be made here is that because more female drop-outs are not in the labour force compared with male drop-outs, their overall average income in a group is very low.

Further analysis was carried out to determine whether any relationship exists between respondents' personal income and their families' income during the time respondents were in high school. As it turns out, the greater the family income at the time they attended high school, the greater their personal income is today. This holds true for both drop-outs and non drop-outs. Notwithstanding this, non drop-outs who are employed full-time earn more personal income than do drop-outs who come from families that had the same household income during their high school years

D. Marital Status

A further factor separating drop-outs and non drop-outs is marital status. Drop-outs, both across the province as a whole and among the Franco-Ontarian sample, are more likely to be married, or to have been married, than are non drop-outs. The fact that drop-outs in the sample are approximately one year older than non drop-outs has some obvious effect on the difference in marital status, but when this is controlled, drop-outs still marry at an earlier age than do non drop-outs.

Table 9

MARITAL STATUS OF DROP-OUTS AND NON DROP-OUTS

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %
MALE				
Single	59	74	51	59
Married	37	26	46	39
Separated/divorced/widowed	4	0	3	2
FEMALE				
Single	40	57	30	44
Married	47	39	65	54
Separated/divorced/widowed	13	4	5	2

One of the most likely explanations for this is that those pursuing higher education are often likely to postpone marriage until they have completed their studies. Drop-outs are, of course, not in this situation and have no such barriers to their marrying.

One consequence of drop-outs marrying at an earlier age, and presumably starting a family, however, is that it becomes more difficult to contemplate returning to complete an education.

IV. ATTITUDES TOWARD EDUCATION

A. The Importance of Education

While, as Table 10 indicates, both drop-outs and non drop-outs believe a good education is important in terms of job opportunities or advancement, non drop-outs are more likely than drop-outs to stress that a good education is very important. This is especially the case with the non drop-outs across the province. The Franco-Ontarian groups are somewhat closer together in terms of their perceptions.

Table 10

IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION FOR DROP-OUTS AND NON DROP-OUTS

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %
Very important	62	85	62	74
Somewhat important	32	14	32	24
Not too important	4	1	6	2
Not at all important	2	0	0	0

The difference between drop-outs and non drop-outs is perhaps not surprising, given the different educational experiences of the two groups. Possibly drop-outs have developed this attitude subsequent to their dropping out, either as a rationale for dropping out or because they believe that they have not been adversely affected by dropping out. It is also possible, though, that the somewhat lesser emphasis on education recorded here was a factor in the decision to drop out. The data obviously cannot provide a definitive answer.

There are some significant gender differences on this issue. Male drop-outs are much less likely than female ones to believe that an education is very important. Among both the province-wide sample and the Franco-Ontarian sample, only 54% of males compared with 70% of females say a good education is very important. Among non drop-outs, while males are still somewhat less likely to believe a good education is very important, the gender differences are 5% and 8% for the province-wide and the Franco-Ontarian samples, respectively.

B. Perceptions of Personal Experience

Although a majority of both drop-outs and non drop-outs tend to evaluate the quality of the education they received in high school as "excellent" or "good", drop-outs are, as Table 11 makes clear, less positive. This is especially true for the province-wide sample. Interestingly, Franco-Ontarians generally evaluate the quality of their education highly and only a 10% difference separates the two Franco-Ontarian groups in terms of evaluating their education as "excellent" or "good". In fact, Franco-Ontarian drop-outs are nearly as positive on this dimension as non drop-outs across the province overall. This is not a factor of a difference in the type of school attended. Those Franco-Ontarians who attended a public school, rather than a separate school, are, in fact, more likely to say their experience was "excellent" or "good".

Table 11

PERCEPTION OF QUALITY OF EDUCATION RECEIVED

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %
Excellent	12	23	17	18
Good	48	58	60	69
Only fair	29	16	17	10
Poor	10	2	6	3

In terms of gender differences, male drop-outs in the province-wide sample are less likely than their female counterparts to believe that the quality of the education they received was excellent or good (54% to 66%).

While a significant majority of both drop-outs and non drop-outs evaluate their high school education in a positive manner, four in ten drop-outs from the province-wide sample and close to a quarter of the Franco-Ontarian sample believe their education was only fair or poor. Those who took this position, both drop-outs and non drop-outs, were asked to give their main reason for their dissatisfaction.

As Table 12 makes clear, drop-outs and non drop-outs give somewhat different reasons for their dissatisfaction with the education they received. Among drop-outs, the single largest group of comments deal with teachers. Over four in ten comments from the province-wide sample relate to this issue, as do close to this number among the Franco-Ontarian sample. Non drop-outs, on the other hand and as Table 12 shows, are more likely to complain about the courses rather than the teachers. Approximately half of all comments non drop-outs make are some form of complaint about courses, compared with four in ten drop-outs from the province-wide sample and one in three Franco-Ontarian drop-outs.

One major complaint from drop-outs from the province-wide sample is that teachers did not care about the students. A few comments from the verbatim responses illustrate this. One respondent commented on the "Lack of enthusiasm on the part of teachers"; another that "Teachers did not care, I was slow in school...needed help, but no one gave it"; while another stated that "Teachers didn't show any interest in the students".

Table 12

REASON FOR DISSATISFACTION WITH QUALITY OF EDUCATION RECEIVED

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %
Teachers	41	27	37	22
Attitudes of teachers	19	14	28	4
Teachers - other	21	13	9	18
Courses	39	50	33	55
Not available/not in depth	24	21	24	22
Subjects/material Not relevant	15	29	9	33
Disliked school	7	10	4	4
Student/teacher ratio	4	0	6	4
Other	6	11	13	15
Don't know/no response	4	3	6	0

Most of the other comments relating to teachers are also of a negative nature. Teachers having bad attitudes, not imposing enough discipline, and showing favouritism, as well as the poor quality of teaching are some of the other comments.

In the second group of comments dealing with courses, two issues emerge: first, the kinds of courses a student wanted were not available or the courses were not in-depth enough. Verbatim comments on this subject include: "Didn't have courses available that I was interested in"; "Didn't have a wide variety of subjects aside from the basics"; and "The teachers were excellent but courses were lacking in depth". The second set of comments deals with the problem that courses were not relevant and did not prepare one for the future. Comments dealing with this complaint include: "It did not get me ready for anything. After I left school everything I was taught did not help me. I had to start at the beginning again"; and "I feel it did not prepare me enough to cope with the outside world".

The negative comments, and presumably opinions, on the part of drop-outs regarding teachers were further confirmed when respondents were asked to evaluate directly the extent to which teachers and staff at the respondent's high school cared both for the students and for the respondent. While four in ten non drop-outs in the Ontario-wide sample shown in Table 13 say teachers and staff cared a great deal about students, only 25% of drop-outs believe this to be true. Moreover, while only a quarter of drop-outs in the Ontario-wide sample believe teachers and staff cared about them personally, 45% of non drop-outs hold this view.

Table 13 also shows, however, that Franco-Ontarian drop-outs are somewhat different from their counterparts across the province and are close to the level of evaluation made by non drop-outs. This higher evaluation is not a function of Franco-Ontarians being more likely to attend separate schools, since there is virtually no difference in evaluation between those who attended a public school and those who went to a separate school.

Table 13

EVALUATIONS OF TEACHERS/STAFF
BY DROP-OUTS AND NON DROP-OUTS

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %
TEACHERS/STAFF CARE ABOUT STUDENTS				
A great deal	23	40	39	56
Somewhat	55	55	49	39
Not too much	17	5	10	4
Not at all	5	0	2	1
TEACHERS/STAFF CARE ABOUT YOU				
A great deal	26	45	38	48
Somewhat	47	48	50	43
Not too much	18	5	10	6
Not at all	9	1	2	2

There is, though, a gender based factor at work and Table 14 shows this. While the province-wide sample shows virtually no difference by sex, Franco-Ontarian male drop-outs are much more negative than females about the teachers and staff, both in terms of their caring about students generally and about the respondent. In fact, their levels of perception are very close to those of drop-outs across the province overall.

Table 14

EVALUATIONS OF TEACHERS/STAFF BY DROP-OUTS AND NON DROP-OUTS

	FRANCO-ONTARIANS SAMPLE ONLY			
	Male Drop-Out %	Female Drop-Out %	Male Non Drop-Out %	Female Non Drop-Out %
TEACHERS/STAFF CARE ABOUT STUDENTS				
A great deal	27	50	48	63
Somewhat	58	40	48	30
Not too much/at all	15	10	4	7
TEACHERS/STAFF CARE ABOUT YOU				
A great deal	28	48	46	51
Somewhat	56	45	43	43
Not too much/at all	16	8	11	6

V. TYPE OF SCHOOL, COURSES TAKEN, GRADES

A. Type of School Attended and Courses Taken

Table 15 compares the proportion of drop-outs to non drop-outs who attended the public school system compared with the separate system. Given the overwhelming proportion of drop-outs and non drop-outs, in the province-wide sample, who attended the public school system, it is clear that there is no strong relationship between being a drop-out and attending public school, although drop-outs are somewhat more likely to have attended a public school. Similarly, the Franco-Ontarian sample indicates that, while not surprisingly, more Franco-Ontarians attended separate schools than those from the province overall, Franco-Ontarian drop-outs are as likely to have attended public school as non drop-outs. The implication here is that those Ontario residents who attended public school were only slightly more likely to drop out than those who attended a separate school.

Table 15

TYPE OF SCHOOL ATTENDED AND COURSES TAKEN BY DROP-OUTS AND NON DROP-OUTS

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %
TYPE OF SCHOOL ATTENDED				
Public school	86	80	63	62
Separate school	11	14	34	32
Private school	2	5	3	6
TYPE OF COURSES TAKEN				
Advanced courses	20	61	22	57
General courses	62	35	71	38
Basic courses	16	3	6	3

The major factor at work in terms of schooling is type of program that a student was involved in rather than the type of school attended. As Table 15 also indicates, the majority of drop-outs were involved in taking general courses, while non drop-outs say they were involved in advanced courses. Few Ontario participants report taking basic courses; however, a majority of those that did are drop-outs.

While drop-outs in the province-wide sample are the most likely to have taken basic courses, there is a strong link between likelihood of having taken basic courses and age. In all, 27% of drop-outs between 25 and 30 years of age took basic courses, compared with 15% of those aged between 22 and 24 years, and 4% of those between ages 18 and 21 years.

B. Grades

In order to assess the impact of perceived school performance in terms of grade point average on the likelihood of dropping out, we asked respondents to estimate their overall average grade during their high school years. Although the most common grade that respondents received at high school was a "B", representing marks between 70 and 79, it is clear from Table 16 that drop-outs recall receiving somewhat lower grades than non do drop-outs. Drop-outs are less likely to recall being "A" students and more likely to recall being "C" students than are non drop-outs. This is especially the case for the province-wide sample; differences between Franco-Ontarian drop-outs and non drop-outs are somewhat less evident.

Table 16

GRADE-POINT AVERAGE DURING HIGH SCHOOL YEARS

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %
A - 80 and above	7	24	9	21
B - 70-79	46	59	64	64
C - 60-69	39	16	22	14
D - 50-59	6	1	4	2
F - Failed (volunteered)	1	0	2	0

The general trend for drop-outs to report lower grade point averages than non drop-outs also holds across the type of courses that respondents took. Thus, while those drop-outs who took advanced courses were more likely to report a higher grade-point average than other drop-outs, their reported grade-point average is still lower than that of non drop-outs who took advanced courses.

Female respondents generally say they had a higher grade-point average than do male respondents, a relationship that holds for drop-outs and non drop-outs in the province-wide sample. In all, 53% of male drop-outs reported average grades of a "C" or less, but only 38% of female drop-outs report such grades.

C. Choice of Courses

One of the issues that had been identified earlier as a reason for younger Ontario residents expressing dissatisfaction with the quality of their education was their belief that there was a lack of choice in terms of the courses that they could take. This is confirmed from responses to a question put to respondents that asked directly about choice.

Two positions were put to respondents: the first was that there were too many elective choices in courses and that if there were fewer choices attention could be focused on ensuring that students know the basic subjects well. The second position was that while it is important to have some courses students must take, students should be given as much choice as possible in order to expose them to a wide range of ideas and experiences.

In response to these positions, just under three-quarters of both drop-outs (73%) and non drop-outs (72%) indicate that choice should be given in courses. Among Franco-Ontarians, 70% of drop-outs and 78% of non drop-outs prefer the choice option.

VI. SITUATION AND ATTITUDES OF DROP-OUTS

A. Grade and Age Left High School

Drop-outs left secondary school at diverse ages. While a few respondents report that they left at ages 14 and 15, two-thirds of drop-outs left high school between the ages of 16 and 17. As Table 17 also shows, the median age for leaving is close to 17 years. As far as the grade that drop-outs report leaving at, the most common is Grade 11, but approximately half of drop-outs report leaving at either Grades 10 or 12.

Table 17

AGE DROPPED OUT AND GRADE AT THE TIME

	PROVINCE-WIDE SAMPLE %	FRANCO-ONTARIANS %
AGE		
14 years	2	4
15 years	9	6
16 years	34	29
17 years	33	36
18 years	18	19
19 years	3	2
20 years	1	4
MEDIAN AGE	16.64 years	16.81 years
GRADE		
9	8	8
10	29	25
11	39	42
12	21	22
13	2	3

There is some evidence that the size of community has an impact on the grade at which students drop out. Those living in larger communities report that they were older when they dropped out and were in a slightly higher grade. In all, 41% and 46% of the Ontario-wide respondents living in communities of less than 10,000 and between 10,000 and 99,999, respectively, report leaving school during Grade 9 or 10, compared with 34% and 30% of those living in communities of between 100,000 and one million and in the Toronto area, respectively. (This interpretation, though, assumes that respondents have not moved from one size of community to another since leaving high school.)

One of the major issues regarding the age and grade at which students drop out of school is that of the extent to which students fall behind their age grade and the impact of this on dropping out. Table 18 explores this issue and indicates that the majority of drop-outs appear to be within one grade of the grade they should be in given their age. Thus, for those who left school at age 16, for example, the great majority were in Grade 10 or 11, only 12% report that they were in Grade 9. Similarly, the majority of 17-year-olds were in Grades 11 and 12, only 18% were in a grade lower. There appears to be a greater discrepancy for those 18 years and above. A significant proportion of 18-year-olds (41%) were in Grade 11 or lower at the time they left high school. This suggests that the mismatch between age and grade may not become a critical issue until one reaches 18 years of age and possibly questions whether one can, in fact, complete high school. The lower part of Table 18 reports essentially the same results for the Franco-Ontarian sample.

Table 18

AGE OF LEAVING SCHOOL

ONTARIO-WIDE

AGE	Nine %	Ten %	Eleven %	Twelve %	Thirteen %
14-15 years	30	51	19	0	0
16 years	12	46	37	5	0
17 years	1	17	55	24	2
18 years	2	6	33	53	6
19-20 years	0	15	15	55	0

FRANCO-ONTARIANS

AGE	Nine %	Ten %	Eleven %	Twelve %	Thirteen %
14-15 years	42	37	16	5	0
16 years	9	38	50	3	0
17 years	4	17	50	25	4
18 years	0	11	40	45	5
19-20 years*	0	31	15	46	8

* Sample too small to be statistically reliable.

B. Reasons for Dropping Out

Respondents were asked to recall their main reason for leaving high school, and their responses can be grouped into three main types: those dealing with the desire to get a job; those dealing with some education related problem; and those dealing with personal problems. As Table 19 shows, respondents across the province are somewhat different from Franco-Ontarians in the reasons they give for leaving secondary school. For Ontarians generally, the single largest reason for dropping out deals with school related issues, while for Franco-Ontarians, the main concern is the desire to get a job. Approximately one in five reasons deal with a problem in one's personal life.

Table 19

MAIN REASONS FOR LEAVING HIGH SCHOOL

	ONTARIO-WIDE SAMPLE	FRANCO-ONTARIANS	ONTARIO-WIDE Male %	ONTARIO-WIDE Female %
School Related	43	30	48	38
Lack of interest/dislike/ boredom	24	19	26	22
Problems with teachers	7	4	9	5
Discipline problems	4	2	6	2
Courses offered	4	4	3	5
Poor grades	4	1	4	4
Work Related	27	40	36	18
Personal	23	22	12	34
Problem at home	12	8	8	15
Marriage/pregnancy	7	10	1	14
Financial problems	3	2	2	3
Moved	1	2	1	1

The major school related problems cited by drop-outs are that they found school boring or uninteresting or that they disliked school. Typical of these responses are the comments: "I had no interest so there was no point being there"; "Boredom of school generally"; "It was just too boring in school"; and "If I was more interested in what I was doing or if I was told why I was taking some of these things".

Other comments deal with teachers and here typical responses include: "There was a teacher who treated me like a mother, deciding what type of hair cut I should have and what clothes I should wear, so I quit"; and "Teachers, several that I did not like and they did not like me". Other school related reasons for dropping out include being expelled, skipping too many classes, and problems with courses. Some emphasize that the courses did not relate to the "outside world", a point a number of respondents made earlier when asked for their reasons for being dissatisfied with the quality of the education they received.

Work related comments all deal with being offered a job or with a desire to earn money or have a job. Typical comments on this subject were: "I wanted to get job experience"; "To go to work and get a job and finish my diploma at night school rather than going the whole year"; "I wanted to go in the real world"; and "I received a full-time job, I knew it was a good job so I decided to take it and leave school".

The two largest areas of personal problems deal with those at home or marriage and pregnancy. Home problems include the following types of situations: "Pressure at home"; "Left home due to domestic problems"; "Black-outs in class"; "Taken out of school because my father would not buy insurance"; "There was a death in the family and there were problems after that". The pregnancy and marriage reason is self-explanatory, but it is likely that when respondents give marriage as a reason, they are implying that they were, in fact, pregnant and married as a result of the pregnancy.

Those citing financial problems as their reason for leaving school usually had parents who were unable to support them through school. Thus comments included: "I only had a mom and she couldn't support me. We needed the money so I went to work".

Table 19 also shows that a number of gender differences exist in reasons given. Females are generally somewhat less likely to mention school related and work oriented reasons and focus more on personal factors, with problems at home, and marriage and pregnancy being the main reasons mentioned for leaving school. Although not shown, gender differences among Franco-Ontarians tend to follow those for Ontario overall.

In addition to being asked an unaided question dealing with reasons for leaving school, respondents were also asked to respond to a number of school related issues and to indicate how important each item was in their decision to leave school. Responses to these questions are found in Table 20.

Although no issue is overwhelmingly important, as suggested by the wide variety of unaided responses, a number of the items shown in Table 20 are quite important. In particular, boring classes are the most frequently cited item among both Ontario residents overall and among Franco-Ontarians; a majority of the Ontario sample and a near majority among Franco-Ontarians cite this as a "very" or "somewhat" important reason for their leaving. In addition, difficulty with the material to be studied was cited by a near majority of Franco-Ontarians as important, while skipping classes and falling too far behind to make up the work was also of importance to a significant minority of respondents.

Table 20

IMPORTANCE OF VARIOUS SCHOOL RELATED REASONS IN DECISION TO LEAVE SCHOOL

	ONTARIO-WIDE		
REASONS	Very Important %	Somewhat Important %	Not Too/ Not At All Important %
Some classes very boring	23	32	45
Skipped classes and fell behind	20	18	61
Did not get along with a teacher	16	13	71
Had trouble coping with material had to learn	11	19	70
One course too hard	9	17	74

	FRANCO-ONTARIANS		
	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Too/ Not At All Important
Some classes very boring	24	25	51
Had trouble coping with material had to learn	20	26	54
Skipped classes and fell behind	10	22	63
One course too hard	11	25	64
Did not get along well with teacher	14	16	70

There are few differences in responses separating men and women in terms of the importance they attribute to each reason. The only differences are the greater likelihood of Franco-Ontarian women compared with men to report difficulty with coping with the material they had to study, of Franco-Ontarian males compared with females being more likely to say there was a teacher they did not get along with, and of males compared with their female counterparts from the province-wide sample being more likely to say that their classes were boring.

Finally in terms of reasons for leaving school, as a summary question respondents were asked to choose between leaving school in order to get a job and earn money, or leaving because they no longer wanted to be in school as the more important reason for leaving school. When put this way, wanting to get a job was selected by a near majority of Ontario residents (49%) and a majority of Franco-Ontarians (58%), while respectively 32% and 72% of these groups select not wanting to stay in school as the more important reason, and 15% of both groups volunteer that neither of these reasons was of special importance. While, this position is consistent for the Franco-Ontarian sample in terms of their response to the open-ended question on why they left school, among Ontario residents overall this response is in contrast to the greater emphasis respondents put on school related problems as a reason for leaving school. For Ontario residents overall these data suggest school problems and the desire to get a job are both important factors, each possibly reinforcing the decision to leave school.

Consistent with earlier data, males (56%) are more likely than females (42%) to opt for the job reason across the province as are Franco-Ontario males (64%) compared with females (52%).

C. Work and Leaving School

The previous section has indicated that the desire to get a job appears to play a significant role in the decision of students to leave secondary school. An important issue in this regard is the extent to which having some type of job was instrumental in the decision to leave school.

Table 21 indicates that a narrow majority of Ontario respondents and Franco-Ontarians report that they actually had a job of some kind prior to leaving school, while approximately four in ten report that they had to go out and look for a job. When demographic variations are considered, however, Ontario males (61%) were much more likely than females (41%) to have a job to go to, as were Franco-Ontarian males (69%) compared with their female counterparts (48%). (For some females this question did not apply, since they left school because they were pregnant and presumably were not going to get a job. This should be taken into account in interpreting the lower incidence of females reporting that they had a job to go to.)

Table 21

JOB STATUS AND LEAVING SCHOOL

	ONTARIO-WIDE %	FRANCO-ONTARIANS %
JOB STATUS		
Had job prior to leaving	51	58
Had to look for a job	45	40
Not applicable	4	2
JOB SEARCH NEEDS		
Had part-time/summer job	65	61
Went and found a job	31	39
ROLE HAVING A JOB PLAYED IN DECISION TO LEAVE		
Very large part	22	26
Large part	38	17
Not too much of a part	18	38
No part at all	22	26

As Table 21 makes clear, among those who had a job to go to, a substantial majority -- close to two-thirds -- report that this job was a part-time or summer job they already had. Most of the remaining drop-outs report that they had to find a job. Taking all drop-outs together, including those who had to look for a job, one in three drop-outs went to the part-time or summer job that they already had immediately after leaving high school.

Although, as noted above, males were more likely to have a job to go to, among those who report that they had a job to go to, females (74%) in the Ontario-wide sample are more likely than males (59%) to say the job they went to was one that they already had. In other words, males are more likely to say they went out and found a job in order to leave high school. No such gender based relationship exists among Franco-Ontarians.

A significant proportion of drop-outs earlier indicated that they had left school because they wanted to get into the labour force. This finding is confirmed when respondents were asked directly how big a part having a job played in their decision to leave school. As Table 21 notes, 60% of Ontario residents believe that having a job played a large part in their decision to leave school compared to 43% of Franco-Ontarian respondents.

When taken together, these findings suggest that access to a job is a factor in deciding to drop out, and therefore if jobs are less available for youth, the incidence of dropping out may be lower.

D. Actions That Would Have Enabled Students to Stay in School

Some measure of the strength of feeling that drop-outs had about leaving school comes from the fact that a majority of respondents report that there were no actions or circumstances that would have persuaded them to stay in school. Fully 60% of Ontario residents and 72% of Franco-Ontarians take this strong position. At the same time, at least across the province overall, males (66%) are somewhat more likely than females (55%) to say that nothing could have persuaded them to change their mind. Among Franco-Ontarians, however, there is little difference by gender.

Those who say some actions or circumstances could have prevented their leaving offer a wide variety of activities or circumstances that could have helped, and these are displayed in Table 22. The most frequent comments, approximately one-third, deal with school type issues. The most common of these relate to comments about courses being more interesting. Typical comments of this nature include: "A little bit more excitement in the classroom. It was too boring"; "If teaching had been more interesting and less boring"; and "If courses had been more challenging and less repetitive, I would have stayed". Nearly as frequent as comments on uninteresting courses were those regarding student/teacher relations. Typical comments of this nature included: "If it wasn't for the teacher I would have finished high school"; "If I'd felt teachers had shown more interest in me as a person"; "I was very slow in reading"; and " If additional help was given and teachers spent more time, then I would have stayed in school". A third set of comments relating to school also deals with courses and here the comments are focused on the courses being offered, the limited choices available, and the certain types of courses a student wanted to take that were not offered at the school.

Table 22

ACTIONS OR CIRCUMSTANCES THAT WOULD HAVE PERSUADED DROP-OUTS TO STAY IN SCHOOL

	ONTARIO-WIDE %	FRANCO-ONTARIANS %
SCHOOL	36	30
Courses more interesting	14	2
Teacher/student relations	12	12
Different types of courses	9	12
GUIDANCE REQUIRED	23	28
At school	17	21
From parents	6	7
BETTER GRADES	1	4
FAMILY SITUATION	10	7
FINANCES	9	9
OTHER	20	19

The second group of comments shown in Table 22 deals with the need for some form of guidance. Approximately a quarter of respondents offer this type of comment. Responses were broken down into those directed toward the school and those toward the home. The importance of the school environment is shown by the fact that three-quarters of these comments focus on school rather than on home. Comments dealing with school include: "If I had more support from the school toward the career I wanted to pursue"; " If someone had counselled me better in a way that would have pointed out how it (school) would help me later in my career"; and "Guidance counsellor failed to inform me that Brock University would have accepted me out of Grade 12". Home type comments include: "If my parents had taken more interest in my education". Related to parental guidance are comments that deal with family situations and problems at home. Thus respondents comment: " I would have stayed in school had there not been problems at home"; and "If I had a better relationship at home".

When gender differences in response are considered, the only major variation is in terms of males in the province-wide sample being more likely than females (16% to 4%) to make comments about the range of courses offered. Presumably males wanted courses of a technical nature and some of the comments suggest this.

Further evidence of the extent to which respondents recall being committed to leaving school comes from the fact that perceptions of the extent to which they believe that teachers and staff did not care about them are not linked to a belief regarding actions or circumstances that could have prevented respondents from leaving school. Thus 66% of those in the Ontario-wide sample who say teachers cared a great deal about them also say no actions could have prevented them from leaving high school. Only among those who believe teachers did not care for them at all is there evidence of a relationship and only 41% say no actions could have prevented their leaving. Possibly this group felt very alienated from school and teachers, and some interest on the part of teachers might have kept them in high school. No such link, however, is evident among Franco-Ontarians. This does raise the issue of whether schools, by showing more interest in individual students could, in fact, reduce the drop-out rate.

Finally, when the current age of respondents is considered, there is no evidence that more recent drop-outs are more or less likely than their older counterparts to believe that some action could have persuaded them to stay in high school. In fact, at least among the Ontario-wide sample, those respondents 24 years of age or under (68%) are more likely to believe that nothing could have changed their mind compared with those aged between 25 and 30 years (54%). It is, of course, impossible to determine if this response is a result of aging or if younger people dropping out in recent years are simply more determined to leave than they were 10 years ago or so.

E. Contact with School About Leaving

A further sign of the extent to which respondents wanted to leave school comes from the fact that a majority, as Table 23 makes clear, did not report speaking to any member of the school, while only approximately four in ten respondents report that they had spoken to someone in the school.

Table 23

SCHOOL CONTACTS PRIOR TO LEAVING

	ONTARIO-WIDE %	FRANCO-ONTARIANS %
CONTACT		
Spoke to staff	37	44
Did not speak to staff	62	56
WHEN LEFT SCHOOL		
During break period	40	35
During term	59	64

One of the possible reasons that a majority of drop-outs did not speak to anyone at the school was because they decided to leave school during a break period, such as the summer. As Table 23 also shows, over one-third of drop-outs say they left school during a break period, while a significant majority say they left during the term.

When these two results are cross tabulated, as they are in Table 24, then it is clear that even among those who left school during the term, and presumably when they would have had an opportunity to speak to staff at their school, only 44% of Ontarians generally and 50% of Franco-Ontarians report that they spoke to staff. Table 24 also shows that a significant minority of those who left during a break also spoke to school staff. This suggests that they had contemplated leaving during the previous term and had spoken to staff about it and had either decided to finish the term or had made their decision to leave during the break.

Table 24

TIME LEFT SCHOOL AND CONTACT
PRIOR TO LEAVING

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Spoke To Staff %	Did Not Speak To Staff %	Spoke To Staff %	Did Not Speak To Staff %
TIME LEFT				
During break period	25	75	34	66
During term	44	55	50	50

Although a minority of respondents report that they spoke to school staff prior to leaving, there is little evidence that those who say that some activities or circumstances could have persuaded them to stay were more likely to speak to staff. Among those in the Ontario-wide sample, only 43% say they spoke to a staff member, while only 36% of Franco-Ontarians say this. Clearly, even those who believe some type of action could have helped their situation did not try to contact staff.

The type of problems students were facing is, of course, a factor in the likelihood of approaching a member of the school staff, but even here, as Table 25 shows, there is no strong relationship between the problem that a student faced and whether or not he/she discussed with school staff the possibility of leaving. Certainly among the problems that were directly school related, such as being bored with classes or disliking school, only 39% and 44%, respectively, of the Ontario-wide sample and the Franco-Ontarian sample report that they spoke to a staff member.

Table 25

REASONS FOR LEAVING
AND CONTACT WITH STAFF

ONTARIO-WIDE

	Start Work/ Career %	Bored/ Disliked School %	Problems With a Teacher %	Married/ Pregnant %	Personal/ Home %	Total %
CONTACT						
Spoke to staff	32	39	34	35	44	37
Did not speak to staff	68	61	66	65	56	63

FRANCO-ONTARIANS

	Start Work/ Career %	Bored/ Disliked School %	Problems With a Teacher %	Married/ Pregnant %	Personal/ Home %	Total %
CONTACT						
Spoke to staff	36	44	*	65	47	45
Did not speak to staff	64	56		35	53	55

* Number of cases is too small to be statistically reliable.

Gender differences regarding those who were in contact with school staff prior to leaving are evident within the Franco-Ontarian sample, where 52% of females report speaking to a staff member compared with 37% among males. Among the Ontario-wide sample, however, gender differences are minimal.

The kind of school a student went to, be it public or separate, is not strongly linked to whether or not they spoke to a staff member, but the type of program a student was in is linked to speaking to a staff member. Of those who say they took advanced courses, among the Ontario sample, 49% report speaking to a staff member, compared with 36%

and 24%, respectively, who were in general and basic courses. Much the same relationship is apparent for Franco-Ontarians where 56% and 39%, respectively, who took advanced and general courses report speaking to a staff member. (The sample size for those attending basic courses is too small to be relied upon.) A somewhat similar relationship holds when grade-point average is concerned. Those who received the lowest grades tend to be the least likely to have spoken to staff members.

Finally, in terms of the factors associated with a person speaking to a staff member, the extent to which a respondent recalls feeling that the teachers and staff at the school did not care about them is not strongly related to whether or not they spoke to a staff member at the school. Among those who believe that the staff cared not at all about them, 34% say they spoke to a staff person, while among those who believe the school staff cared a great deal about them, only 41% say they spoke to a staff member. Much the same type of finding is apparent among Franco-Ontarians.

Among those who did speak to a staff member, the most common people spoken to, as Table 26 points out, are guidance counsellors, and principals and vice-principals. Across the province, guidance counsellors are more likely to be approached than are principals and vice-principals, while among Franco-Ontarians, there is little difference in the proportion approaching each group. Few respondents report speaking to teachers. There is an interesting dynamic associated with gender differences in who is approached. Males in the Ontario-wide sample are as likely to report that they spoke to principals and vice-principals as spoke to guidance counsellors, while females are more likely to report speaking to guidance counsellors. Table 26 reports these figures for the Ontario sample. Among the Franco-Ontarian sample, males are considerably more likely to approach principals and vice-principals, while females are more likely to approach guidance counsellors. Possibly females find it more difficult to approach principals and vice-principals and easier to deal with guidance counsellors.

Table 26

CONTACT WITH SCHOOL STAFF AND PERCEIVED LEVEL OF PERSUASION

			ONTARIO-WIDE	
	ONTARIO-WIDE %	FRANCO-ONTARIANS %	MALE %	FEMALE %
WHO SPOKE TO				
Guidance counsellor	48	39	41	55
Principal/vice-principal	36	44	42	31
Teacher	11	17	13	9
Other (volunteered)	4	0	4	4
EXTENT PERSON TRIED TO PERSUADE THEM TO STAY				
A great deal	32	30	-	-
Somewhat	26	20	-	-
Not too much	22	24	-	-
Not at all	19	26	-	-

The extent to which respondents recall the staff person they spoke with as trying to persuade them to remain in school varies considerably, as Table 26 shows, but overall a near majority of Ontarians generally and Franco-Ontarians believe that the person they spoke with did not try too much or did not try at all to persuade them to change their mind. In all, fewer than one respondent in three believe that this person tried very hard to get the student to change his/her mind.

Although most respondents believe staff members did not try very hard to get them to change their mind, those who spoke with guidance counsellors are more likely to believe that they tried "very" or "somewhat" hard compared with those who spoke with principals or vice-principals (Table 27). Possibly guidance counsellors believe it is more their responsibility to try to persuade potential drop-outs to remain in school than do principals or vice-principals.

Table 27

PERSON SPOKEN TO AND
EXTENT ENCOURAGED TO STAY

ONTARIO-WIDE

	Very Hard %	Somewhat Hard %	Not Too/ Not At All Hard %
Principal/vice-principal	25	18	55
Guidance counsellor	34	30	36

FRANCO-ONTARIANS

	Very Hard %	Somewhat Hard %	Not At All Hard %
Principal/vice-principal	23	20	57
Guidance counsellor	46	17	37

In an earlier part of this report, it was noted that a substantial majority of respondents report that they believe teachers and staff at the high school they attended cared about them a "great deal" or "somewhat". When a similar question was put to respondents later in the questionnaire, this time concerning the extent to which they believe teachers cared about their leaving school, only about half of those in the two samples (as shown in Table 28) believe that teachers cared "a great deal" or "somewhat" about their leaving; only about one in six respondents, however, believe teachers cared "a great deal" about their leaving. The suggestion here is that respondents did not feel a particularly strong bond or any strong feeling of belonging in the sense that they believe the teaching staff cared about their welfare. The fact that this figure is somewhat more negative than the first measurement is likely a result of respondents, in the course of the interview, coming to reflect more negatively on their high school experiences. Both male and female respondents showed little difference in their perceptions on this issue.

Table 28

PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS' CONCERN AND PERSONAL RESPONSE TO LEAVING HIGH SCHOOL

	ONTARIO-WIDE %	FRANCO-ONTARIANS %
TEACHERS CARE ABOUT YOU LEAVING		
A great deal	15	17
Somewhat	36	31
Not much at all	17	23
Not at all	29	26
FEELINGS ABOUT LEAVING HIGH SCHOOL		
Very glad	20	15
Glad	45	46
Not too glad	21	29
Not at all glad	13	10

In line with the earlier finding that a majority of respondents did not discuss their leaving with staff at their high school, a majority also do not believe believe that any actions or circumstances could have made them change their mind about leaving. A significant proportion (65% of the Ontario sample, 61% of the Franco-Ontarian sample) of drop-outs, as Table 28 reports, say they felt "very glad" or "glad" when they left high school. Among males and females in both samples, differences in response are minimal.

There is, though, some variation in response depending upon a respondent's reported reasons for leaving high school. Those who report being most relieved about leaving were those who gave their reasons for leaving as finding school or classes boring or disliking school, in all 84% and 71% of this group in the Ontario-wide and Franco-Ontarian samples, respectively, claim that they were "very glad" or "glad" to leave high school. On the other hand, those who were least likely to report being glad were respondents who said that they left school for personal reasons related to problems at home. Among this group, only 37% and 40%, respectively of the Ontario-wide and Franco-Ontarian sample report being very glad or glad to leave home.

Interestingly, feelings about leaving school have no consistent impact on whether a student reports talking to a staff member at the school.

VII. LATER EDUCATION EXPERIENCES

A. Intention to Complete High School

Despite a substantial proportion of drop-outs reporting that they were glad to leave high school, just over half, as shown in Table 29, say that it was their intention to return and complete their high school education. Both males and females are as likely to say they intended to return to complete their education. The proportion of those claiming that they intended to return is, at least among the Ontario-wide sample, strongly influenced by the current age of the respondent. Younger drop-outs are more likely than older ones to report that they intended to return to complete high school.

While the intention to complete high school is not low, the proportion who report that they have actually finished high school is very low. As Table 29 indicates, only 18% of the Ontario-wide sample and 16% of the Franco-Ontarian sample report that they had actually completed high school at the time of the survey.

Table 29

LATER EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

	ONTARIO-WIDE %	FRANCO-ONTARIANS %
EDUCATION INTENTION UPON LEAVING HIGH SCHOOL		
Intended to return	53	53
Did not intend to return	45	47
COMPLETED		
Has completed	18	16
Has not completed	82	84
SUBSEQUENT EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES		
Some educational experiences	61	52
No educational experiences	39	48

Although a majority of respondents have some form of educational experience following their dropping out, Table 30 suggests that drop-outs do not continue their education unless they do so within a few years of dropping out. This is evident from the fact that those aged between 18 and 19 years are nearly as likely as older Ontario drop-outs to report some educational experience, while Franco-Ontarians are generally as likely to do so. The column in Table 30 showing the proportion of drop-outs who had completed high school shows a slightly different pattern. Here at least for Ontario residents overall, a greater number in their twenties have completed high school than those aged 18 and 19 years, and this is to be expected given that those in their twenties have had more time to complete high school. The relationship among Franco-Ontarians is less clear.

Table 30

IMPACT OF CURRENT AGE ON
LIKELIHOOD OF SOME SUBSEQUENT EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE
AND OF COMPLETING HIGH SCHOOL

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Some Subsequent Education %	Completed High School %	Some Subsequent Education %	Completed High School %
AGE				
18-19 years	54	10	54	15
20-21 years	59	25	68	32
22-24 years	67	22	53	3
25-27 years	57	15	47	19
28-30 years	63	19	49	16

Gender differences in subsequent education experience tend to be small, although males across Ontario (65%) are more likely to report some subsequent experience compared with females (56%). In the Franco-Ontarian sample, the relationship is reversed, with males (48%) being somewhat less likely to report experience than females (55%). Gender differences in high school completion are minimal and show males in both samples to be 3% more likely to report that they have completed high school.

B. Subsequent Educational Experience of Those Who Had Not Planned to Return

As noted earlier, a significant minority of drop-outs say that at the time they left high school, they never planned to go back to school. In fact, a majority of Ontario-wide respondents (53%) indicate that they had not intended to participate in any further schooling, but only a little over a third (37%) of Franco-Ontarian respondents report that they have some subsequent educational experience. In terms of completing high school, only 11% in both groups who had initially no intention of furthering their education actually report high school completion, well below the 24% and 22% reported by Ontario-wide and Franco-Ontarian respondents who say they intended to return to school later.

There are two points to be made from these data: first that many of those who leave school feeling they will never attend again eventually come to realize that education is necessary. Second, the strong feeling of not wanting to return to school does carry through to some extent and presumably acts as a barrier to further education and certainly to completing high school.

C. Further Educational Experiences

Among those who have taken courses, Table 31 indicates that technical and vocational courses, high school level courses in particular, as well as correspondence courses are the most frequently mentioned. Very few respondents report taking university courses. Differences between Franco-Ontarians and those in the province overall are also evident in Table 31; those across the province are more likely to have taken technical and vocational courses while Franco-Ontarians are more likely to have taken apprenticeship courses.

Table 31

COURSES TAKEN SINCE DROPPING OUT

	TOTAL SAMPLE		THOSE TAKING COURSES	
	Ontario-Wide %	Franco-Ontarians %	Ontario-Wide %	Franco-Ontarians %
Technical/vocational	23	14	38	28
High school level	22	18	37	34
Correspondence	13	12	21	23
Apprenticeship	4	6	7	12
University level	3	1	6	2
Other	6	6	11	12
No courses taken	39	48	-	-

Note: Percentages add to more than 100% because respondents were allowed up to three mentions.

While a substantial number of respondents report that they have had some subsequent educational experiences, only 15% of Ontario-wide and Franco-Ontarian respondents say they are currently attending or have signed up to take courses of some kind. Gender differences on this are minimal. Age differences, however, show considerable variation in involvement. In particular, as Table 32 shows, educational involvement drops as drop-outs age. Even between the ages of 18 and 19, though, less than 30% of Ontario respondents and less than 40% of Franco-Ontarians report that they are taking a course or have signed up for one. Among Ontario-wide respondents, the 30% level of activity is maintained by 20 and 21 year olds and then drops off sharply. Among Franco-Ontarians, because the sample size is smaller, the percentages tend to be more erratic, and no clear pattern after age 19 is evident other than the fact that only a small minority continue with any kind of education.

Not surprisingly, among 18 and 19 year old respondents, high school courses are the most frequently mentioned, and one-fifth of this age group in both samples report that they were taking high school courses. As the age of the respondent increases, there is a movement to other types of courses, typically vocational and some university, but with courses as likely, and for some age groups more likely, to be part-time as full-time.

Table 32

AGE OF THOSE CURRENTLY TAKING OR SIGNED UP FOR COURSES AND TYPE OF COURSES

ONTARIO-WIDE

AGE	Full-Time High School %	Part-Time High School %	Full-Time Other %	Part-Time Other %	Not Attending/ Not Signed Up %
18-19 years	15	3	7	2	73
20-21 years	5	2	5	17	72
22-24 years	2	0	8	8	81
25-27 years	1	0	3	4	92
28-30 years	1	0	1	5	92

FRANCO-ONTARIANS

AGE	Full-Time High School %	Part-Time High School %	Full-Time Other %	Part-Time Other %	Not Attending/ Not Signed Up %
18-19 years*	8	15	15	0	62
20-21 years	0	4	8	4	84
22-24 years	6	6	0	11	78
25-27 years	0	5	4	5	86
28-30 years	0	1	1	6	91

* Sample size is too small to be reliable.

D. Interest in Further Education

Table 33 shows that over one-third of Ontario and Franco-Ontarian respondents report that they had a great deal of interest in furthering their education. Including those who say they have some interest, close to eight in ten Ontario respondents and two-thirds of the Franco-Ontarian respondents report that they have an interest in furthering their education. When gender differences are considered, women in the Ontario sample are somewhat more likely than men (47% compared to 36% saying they have a great deal of interest) to want to pursue their education. No gender differences are apparent in the Franco-Ontarian sample.

Table 33

INTEREST IN FURTHERING EDUCATION

LEVEL OF INTEREST	ONTARIO-WIDE %	FRANCO-ONTARIANS %
A great deal	41	36
Some	38	32
Not too much	9	16
None at all	12	16

Perhaps not surprisingly, younger people are more likely to say they have an interest in pursuing their education further, but there is also fairly strong interest even among the older age groups. Among Ontarians overall, while 54% of those 18 and 19 years of age say they have "a great deal" of interest in furthering their education, from ages 28 to 30 interest is still high, with 33% saying they have "a great deal" of interest. Very different results are obtained from the Franco-Ontarian sample; there is no strong age relationship in interest in pursuing an education. It remains strong into the late twenties.

Some experience in pursuing an education appears to be a fairly strong ingredient in stimulating the desire to further education. Those who say they have already taken some courses or programs since dropping out are much more likely than those who have not to say that they have a great deal of interest in furthering their education. Among both the

Ontario-wide and Franco-Ontarian sample, 52% and 50%, respectively, of those who have taken some courses express "a great deal" of interest in furthering their education. This compares with only 24% and 20% in those groups, respectively, who say they have "a great deal" of interest and have, up to the time of the survey, not had any educational experiences since dropping out. Much the same relationship holds for those who report that they have gone on to complete high school compared with those who have not.

There are three main courses of study that respondents would most like to undertake. As Table 34 notes, these are completing high school, attending college and attending a trade school of some kind. Males and females differ somewhat in the type of program they would like to undertake. Among males, trade school (34% - Ontario sample, 38% - Franco-Ontarian sample) tends to be most frequently mentioned, while among females completing high school (36% - Ontario sample, 35% - Franco-Ontarian sample) and attending college (34% - Ontario sample, 30% - Franco-Ontarian sample) tend to be more frequently cited. Interestingly, when the age of respondent is considered, aside from younger people being more likely to mention completing high school as their educational objective, interest in all three types of programs remains strong across all the age groups. Thus, among those aged between 28 and 30 years, close to a third of the Ontario-wide and Franco-Ontarian samples report that they would like to complete high school.

Table 34

COURSE OF STUDY MOST INTERESTED IN

	ONTARIO-WIDE %	FRANCO-ONTARIANS %
Completing high school	30	28
Attending college	28	27
Attending trade school	24	28
Attending university	10	13
Other	7	3

E. Reasons For Not Completing Education

Respondents offer a wide variety of reasons for not completing their education, despite their high interest, and no one reason dominates. The most frequently cited reason as shown in Table 35 is that there has not been enough time. Other common reasons cited include: a perceived lack of need for any more education; a respondent had a job and therefore did not consider further education to be needed; or family reasons, including caring for young children, preventing a person pursuing further education.

Table 35

REASON FOR NOT COMPLETING EDUCATION

	ONTARIO-WIDE %	FRANCO-ONTARIANS %
Not had enough time	29	24
Didn't need any more education	17	8
Got a job	10	12
Not enough money	12	10
No interest/don't like studying/	8	12
Family problems/raising children/ marriage/pregnancy	9	10
Did complete/still in school	4	1
Other	6	7
No opinion	4	16

F. Consequences of Dropping Out on Educational Attainment

In an earlier section of this report, it was noted that drop-outs from secondary school, although they are in the labour force, are infrequently found in professional and technical occupations, and managerial positions. There is an obvious reason for this in terms of the limited further educational experiences of drop-outs that this chapter has documented.

As a way of summarizing the impact of dropping out on later educational attainment, Table 36 compares drop-outs and non drop-outs in terms of the highest level of education that each group has completed. The most dramatic impact of dropping out, as Table 36 makes clear, is that two-thirds of Ontario drop-outs, and somewhat more among Franco-Ontarians, have not completed high school. (This may change slightly, given that some drop-outs were registered in courses to complete high school and that some of the younger drop-outs may yet enter such programs. The change in the proportion not completing high school arising from these factors is, however, likely to be minimal.)

A second notable consequence is the much smaller number of drop-outs who have completed technical, vocational, or college programs compared to non drop-outs. A third consequence is the minute number of drop-outs, less than 5%, who have some university experience, compared with the one-third of non drop-outs across the province who do.

Table 36

HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %
Did not complete high school	66	0	71	0
Completed high school only	8	27	6	30
Technical/vocational/college	22	40	21	42
Some university	3	15	1	12
University degree	1	18	1	16

Given the strong links between educational attainment and upper level white collar positions, the great majority of students who drop out even though they may plan to return later have effectively blocked their opportunities to reach these types of positions. This is not to say that drop-outs do not achieve success in their occupational fields. The discussion earlier in the report relating to income and occupation indicated that at lower level positions, drop-outs and non drop-outs apparently earn fairly similar incomes. This finding was, however, not definitive because the cell size involved tends to be small.

VIII. NON DROP-OUTS

Although drop-outs by definition left secondary school at least temporarily prior to graduating, there is the question of whether non drop-outs ever contemplate leaving school. In other words, are there pressures that all high school students experience that make them contemplate dropping out, or is the thought of dropping out limited to those who actually go on to do it.

When this question was put to non drop-outs, a very small proportion, fewer than one in six, report that they had thought about dropping out. Gender differences are limited, although males in both samples say they were more likely to think about dropping out than females. Less than a third of those contemplating dropping out report that they spoke to a staff member, and when they did speak to someone, it was more often likely to be a guidance counsellor than any other staff member. In contrast to the 32% of Ontario-wide drop-outs who report that the staff member they spoke to tried very hard to get them to change their mind, among non drop-outs, as noted earlier, 67% report that the person they spoke to tried very hard to encourage them to stay.

Table 37

THINKING ABOUT DROPPING OUT AND CONTACT WITH SCHOOL STAFF

	ONTARIO-WIDE	FRANCO-ONTARIANS
Thought about leaving	16	10
Did not think about leaving	84	90
CONTACT WITH STAFF		
Spoke to staff	30	--*
Did not speak to staff	70	--
PERSON SPOKEN WITH		
Guidance counsellor	75	--
Teacher	25	--
EXTENT ENCOURAGED TO STAY		
Very hard	67	--
Somewhat hard	17	--
Not too hard	12	--
Not at all hard	4	--

* Sample sizes are too small to be reliable.

IX. FAMILY STRUCTURE AND FAMILY SUPPORT

The family is the most basic of social units and from many perspectives the most important. Certainly in terms of the kinds of socialization experiences children are exposed to and the kind of environment that a child matures in through the high school years, the family plays a vital role. From the point of view of understanding some of the factors contributing to a young person's decision to drop out, understanding the family situation is an important element.

Some idea of the kind of family life that young people experienced during high school and its possible impact on the decision to drop out can be gathered from the extent to which respondents report that they left home once they left school and the reasons given for leaving home.

Approximately the same proportion of drop-outs and non drop-outs report that they left home once they left high school. This represents about one-third of Ontarians overall and four in ten Franco-Ontarians. Table 38 indicates the precise percentages; however, drop-outs give very different reasons for leaving home than do non drop-outs.

Table 38

LEAVING HOME

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %
AFTER LEFT HIGH SCHOOL				
Left home	38	32	44	42
Stayed at home	61	67	56	57
REASON				
Went to university/got a job out of town	17	72	20	62
Wanted to be on own	35	14	48	26
Poor relationship with parents	26	6	18	1
Got married	11	4	7	7
Other	11	4	7	2

A final measure of the family environment is the kind of interest respondents believe their parents showed in their education during their high school years. Overall, while drop-outs report a somewhat lower level of interest in their education than do non drop-outs, Table 39 shows that a majority of respondents believe their parents showed a great deal of interest in their education. Clearly, while some respondents feel that they did not receive the level of interest they wanted, a lack of family interest is not the major factor influencing dropping out. Obviously, though, and as Table 39 indicates, it is important in a number of cases.

Table 39

LEVEL OF INTEREST OF PARENTS
IN RESPONDENTS' EDUCATION

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %
A great deal	53	62	59	73
Some	29	26	24	23
Not too much	9	3	12	3
Not at all	8	2	4	1

X. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

A. Summary

High school drop-outs are more likely to come from families with the following characteristics: parents divorced; lower average household incomes; and fathers working in lower level occupations.

A regional analysis shows that high school drop-outs are more prevalent in southwestern and northern Ontario, and in smaller communities. There are fewer drop-outs in larger urban centres such as Toronto, suggesting that there may be a greater recognition by students in these areas of the importance of completing high school.

There are some very clear consequences of dropping out of high school. Drop-outs are more likely to have been unemployed in the past, work in lower level occupations, and earn less income than non drop-outs.

Drop-outs are also more likely to have married at an earlier age, a phenomenon that makes returning to high school to complete their education more difficult.

While all respondents think that an education is important, non drop-outs are more likely to think that it is very important, a view that is more prevalent among men than among women. This same pattern holds in regard to assessments of respondents' own educational experiences.

Dissatisfaction with one's education is mainly tied to recollections about teachers' attitudes toward students and toward their job, and the quality of instruction. The second major factor causing dissatisfaction with one's education has to do with the type and range of courses available, as well as the subject matter that was being taught at the time the student dropped out.

While type of school attended (i.e. public, private, or separate) does not seem to be a substantial factor in terms of whether one dropped out of school, the type of courses taken is linked to dropping out. Those who were enrolled in general or basic courses as opposed to the advanced courses are much more likely to have been high school drop-outs. Grade point average is also a significant factor. Those reporting lower average grades tend to be more likely to drop out.

The data suggest that a mismatch between age and grade may not become a critical issue affecting decisions to drop out until one reaches 18 years of age and students question whether they can, in fact, complete high school.

The major reasons for dropping out of high school are a desire to get a job, problems relating to school itself (e.g. boredom, teachers), and personal problems (e.g. family problems, marriage, and pregnancy). The data also suggest that the desire to begin working may be the single biggest reason for dropping out, and that the decision to leave school for this reason is much easier if the person already has a job to go to -- for example, a summer or part-time job. It appears likely, however, that the desire to get into the labour force is predicated on negative feelings regarding the school system.

Most drop-outs say that there was nothing at the time that could have persuaded them to stay in school. Moreover, a majority report that they did not speak to anyone at the school about their plans to drop out, nor did many think that teachers cared about their leaving.

Among those who say that they may have been persuaded to stay in school, dealing with school related problems is cited most frequently, while changes to the course curriculum and teacher/student relations are most frequently mentioned as the areas where improvements are needed.

A slim majority of drop-outs report that, at the time they left, they intended to return to high school. The data clearly show, however, that unless they return shortly after dropping out, most do not complete their high school education. Notwithstanding this, a majority do pursue some other form of education at a later point in life -- technical or vocational training, in particular, as well as some high school courses -- but few complete any course of study.

There are a variety of reasons for not completing their education. Foremost, though, is a lack of time. Other reasons for not returning include the perception that more education is unnecessary, that they have a job, and that they lack the money to do so. Implicit in the findings is that most drop-outs, for one reason or another, lack the opportunity to complete their education; only a minority appear to be of the opinion that finishing their education is unnecessary.

B. Discussion

These data raise a number of questions. First, although drop-outs earn less income, have a higher rate of unemployment, are more likely to report being unemployed in the past and are unemployed for a longer period of time, they are at the same time certainly not doing badly. This may change over time, of course. As they age, income and labour force differences between the two groups may diverge considerably. Given this finding for those in their twenties, a major question that research cannot answer is that of whether the differences found in this study constitute an acceptable situation.

There are a number of reasons for believing it might not be. Ontario is currently enjoying low unemployment rates compared to the rest of the country. During the next recession it is likely to be drop-outs who are hardest hit. The debate over the need for a more skilled labour force to help make the country more competitive internationally also suggests that a high proportion of drop-outs is not consistent with the goal of a competitive, skilled, and productive labour force. At the same time, it is a cherished goal of the education system to give citizens the tools to compete on an equal footing in the labour market. Clearly, a drop-out is not in a position to compete fairly. A further factor increasing the importance of the drop-out problem is that it can also undermine efforts to improve the situation of women in Canadian society. Female drop-outs are much more likely than non drop-outs to be in occupations that could be characterized as constituting the female job ghetto. Given these arguments, then, the drop-out problem is one that should be dealt with.

The overall conclusion of this study is that some amount of dropping out may be prevented. While a certain percentage of high school students drop out because of family or personal problems -- circumstances over which the school and teachers may have little influence -- the majority leave because of problems in the school or because or their desire to get out into the "real world" and earn a living.

The data are very clear on what should not be done. To simply allow students to drop out in the expectation that most of them will eventually return to high school is clearly a false assumption. The prevention of dropping out is the only way of ensuring that students will, in fact, complete high school. This means that greater effort needs to be put into programs that can help prevent dropping out.

In examining the data on reasons for dropping out, it is clear that while many students want to get into the labour force, this often appears to be a way of escaping from the school system. Students complain of being bored, and of courses not being relevant or interesting. This suggests that one starting point is to make courses more attractive and interesting to students. This does not mean that more choices need to be offered, but that courses must be made so that they are relevant to students.

Related to these comments is the possibility that students may question the rationale for some of the courses taught in school and how these courses will help them in later life. This may be one of the reasons such a significant number choose to join the workforce: a failure to see the relevance of what is being taught in school. Perhaps what is needed is that at the beginning of their high school career and throughout, students must develop an appreciation for why certain programs such as math and science are important.

The higher drop-out rate among those with lower grade point averages and those in general and basic courses suggests that students in these situations should be given special attention in terms of ensuring that they are appropriately motivated. At the same time, programs that seek to identify potential drop-outs and then provide them with additional support and services could also be introduced.

The general complaint about teachers appearing to show little interest in the subjects being taught and not communicating effectively with potential drop-outs suggests that teachers could be encouraged and possibly be given time off to improve their teaching style and approach in the classroom.

Also important is to anticipate and to address early in high school, students' desire for material things and independence, and their apparent observation that leaving school, moving out of the house, and getting a job is the quickest means of satisfying these desires. Young people, particularly those who are susceptible to dropping out, need to be made more aware that while these urges are normal, there are serious implications and drawbacks to leaving school that may place permanent limitations on their future, particularly as it relates to their working career. Students must be helped to think ideas through and plan on a long-term basis, and to not seek short-term solutions to problems and urges which they may currently face.

Having a job also appears to be a major component in the decision to leave school. While it is probably not possible or desirable to prevent high school students from taking part-time jobs, it is possible to work more effectively in communicating to students the importance of completing high school, and warn them more strongly about the "dead end" nature of part-time jobs.

The fact that most drop-outs seem strongly committed to leaving school suggests the depths of the alienation from the education process. This alienation is clearly something that does not appear overnight, but probably festers for many years. Initiatives and programs designed to limit dropping out must begin early in the high school years.

In addition to drop-outs reporting that classes were boring, the large minority who indicate that the fact that they skipped classes was an important factor in their dropping out suggests that special emphasis should be placed on ensuring that students do not have as many opportunities to skip classes.

The small number of drop-outs who contacted a high school staff member, while it confirms that many students did not want to be "talked out" of dropping out, also attests to the limited amount of trust that drop-outs seem to have in the staff at high schools. This may not be a problem with the staff themselves, but with the fact that staff only have a limited amount of time and are likely to "pick the winners" rather than the loser in terms of to whom they pay most attention. Greater resources directed to potential drop-outs may be one way of fostering a closer relationship with the school staff.

The limited extent to which drop-outs report that principals and vice-principals encouraged them to stay in school suggests, if the responses of drop-outs can be taken at face value, that these staff members offer very little encouragement to drop-outs.

Finally, given the strong interest in further education on the part of drop-outs -- even those in their late twenties -- education programs and communications strategies can perhaps be developed to reach and encourage drop-outs to take part in adult education programs.

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ABSTRACT

This report analyzes attitudinal and situational differences between dropouts and non-dropouts from Ontario's secondary school system. The analysis is based on the results of telephone interviews with 1,400 Ontario residents who attended secondary school in the province and who were between the ages of 18 and 30, 700 of whom dropped out of school before graduation and 700 of whom graduated from high school. Two hundred of the dropouts and 200 of the graduates comprised a special subsample of Franco-Ontarians; data for this subsample is examined separately in the report. The report is divided into 10 sections. Part 1, Introduction, discusses research limitations and describes characteristics of the sample. Part 2 examines family and demographic background. Part 3 looks at the consequences of dropping out in the areas of employment, occupation and income, gender differences in occupation and income, and marital status. Part 4 discusses attitudes toward education. Part 5 looks at the types of schools attended by respondents, the courses they took, and their grades. Part 6 considers the situation and attitudes of dropouts and part 7 looks at the dropouts' later education experiences. Part 8 describes the non-dropouts. Part 9 examines family structure and support. A summary and discussion are included in part 10. (NB)

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A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF DROP-OUTS AND NON DROP-OUTS IN ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOLS

A Report to the *Ontario Study of the Relevance of Education and the Issue of Dropouts*

Student Retention and Transition Series

MICHAEL SULLIVAN,
Decima Research

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I. INTRODUCTION

This report by Decima Research analyses attitudinal and situational differences between drop-outs and non drop-outs from Ontario's secondary school system.

The analysis is based on the results of telephone interviews with 1,400 Ontario residents who attended secondary school in the province and are between the ages of 18 and 30. In all, 700 interviews were carried out with those who left secondary school for whatever reasons prior to graduation and the same number with those who completed their secondary school education. A special subsample was undertaken of Franco-Ontarians -- 200 interviews with drop-outs and 200 interviews with non drop-outs. Consequently, the main Ontario sample consists of 500 each of drop-outs and non drop-outs. In the analysis to follow the Franco-Ontarian sample will be examined separately.

In view of the fact that one of the objectives of the study is to identify any gender based differences relating to drop-outs and non drop-outs, a 50/50 sex quota was applied. While this has the disadvantage of not allowing a gender based incidence of drop-outs to be arrived at, it has the advantage of ensuring that a sufficiently large sample of both sexes is available for analysis; this enables gender based differences to be more easily identified.

A basic issue in the research is, of course, the definition of a drop-out. For purposes of this study, a drop-out is any person who left secondary school for whatever reason prior to graduating. This left open the possibility that a person could have returned and completed his/her secondary education. Since part of the thrust of this study is to measure the extent to which drop-outs actually do return to complete secondary school, this definition allows for this issue to be examined.

In order to identify drop-outs and non drop-outs, we asked all potential respondents a screening question prior to the interview. This question asked:

> During the course of your high school education, did you leave high school, in other words terminate your education, at any time prior to graduating, regardless of whether you later returned?

Those who answered "yes" were administered the drop-out questionnaire. Those who answered "no" were, in addition, asked if they were currently a high school student. If they were, the interview was terminated; if they were not, they were administered the non drop-out questionnaire. This second screening procedure was adopted, because, in large part, it is the outcome of the secondary school experience that is being explored; to include non drop-out high school students would be irrelevant to understanding this issue.

In order to allow for the comparison between drop-outs and non drop-outs, we asked many of the same questions of the two groups. In addition, questions relating to dropping out and to subsequent educational experiences were put to the drop-out group.

The objectives of this research are to identify:

- The long-term financial and employment effects of dropping out;
- The reasons for dropping out;
- The extent to which drop-outs return to school;
- Any variable effects by sex;
- The educational needs and programs that drop-outs desire;
- A communications strategy for getting drop-outs to enter some kind of program;
- Any variable effects by Anglophone and Francophone populations; and
- The effects of part-time student employment on the drop-out phenomenon.

A. Research Limitations

An important caveat to bear in mind with this type of research is the reliance that is necessarily placed on the respondent's ability to recall events of the past. In striving to identify and understand the factors that may have led to decisions to leave high school, the researcher must rely on the ability of the respondent not only to recall accurately events that may have occurred 10 years ago, but also to remember attitudes and feelings of the day as well. For example, it is possible that some respondents incorrectly specified their parents' household income at the time they were in high school or the age at which they dropped out of school.

Besides the limitations of memory, the other major concern with this kind of research is the effect of recent events on recollections of the past. The notion that recent experiences tend to colour people's recall of past events and attitudes is well-documented in the literature.

On the positive side, it is likely that memory error is randomly distributed within the sample and is unlikely to have caused a significant bias in the data. Nonetheless, the reader should bear this limitation in mind and use the findings as indicative of patterns rather than as completely factual information.

B. Characteristics of the Sample

Prior to beginning this analysis, it is important to examine three dimensions that could influence the results. These are region, city size, and age variations between drop-outs and non drop-outs. Differences between the sample of drop-outs and non drop-outs along these dimensions can influence the overall results and need to be taken into account.

The distribution of drop-outs and non drop-outs across the province, as shown in Table 1, indicates that in terms of the province-wide sample the incidence of dropping out tends to be more frequent in southwestern and northern Ontario and is less frequent in the Toronto area.

Table 1

REGIONAL, COMMUNITY SIZE, AND AGE DISTRIBUTION OF DROP-OUTS AND NON DROP-OUTS

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Drop Out %	Non Drop-Out %	Drop Out %	Non Drop-Out %
REGION				
East	13	15	41	43
Central	29	31	0	1
Toronto	16	34	0	0
North	14	5	58	54
Southwest	28	15	0	2
COMMUNITY SIZE				
Less than 10,000	29	12	53	42
10,000 - 99,999	16	10	14	14
100,000 - 999,999	32	33	32	44
1 million or more	24	45	0	0
AGE				
18-19 years	12	9	7	8
20-21 years	13	18	13	19
22-24 years	19	26	18	22
25-27 years	26	20	29	23
28-30 years	30	27	35	28
MEDIAN AGE	25.16	24.18	25.89	24.63

The lower frequency of dropping out in the Toronto area means that when community size differences are considered, drop-outs tend to be more frequently found in the smaller communities across the province (Table 1).

Because Franco-Ontarians live mainly in Eastern and Northern Ontario, their sample was drawn from these areas. As Table 1 suggests, drop-outs are more likely to be found in communities with populations of less than 10,000.

Age variations are also apparent between drop-outs and non drop-outs. Table 1 also shows that the non drop-outs in the sample tend to be slightly younger than the drop-outs. The median age for the drop-out sample across the province overall is 25.16 years, while that of non drop-outs is 24.18 years. For the Franco-Ontarian sample, the median ages are 25.89 and 24.63 for drop-outs and non drop-outs, respectively.

The differences in regional, community size, and age distribution between the drop-outs and non drop-outs sample can have some impact on results; where this is apparent, note will be made in the text of these differences. Where no mention is made, this is because these variations have no impact on the overall results.

II. FAMILY AND DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

A. Family Background

In identifying the causes of dropping out or of staying and completing secondary school, family background is an obvious factor to be examined. As Table 2 makes clear, there are significant differences between drop-outs and non drop-outs in the occupation of fathers and in family income during the time respondents were in high school. Those who did not complete secondary school were more likely to have fathers who were in blue collar occupations and were less likely to be involved in upper level white collar jobs or to be self-employed.

Table 2

FAMILY BACKGROUND OF DROP-OUTS AND NON DROP-OUTS

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %
FATHER'S OCCUPATION				
Professional/technical/ cultural	9	15	3	14
Manager/owner	13	21	6	11
Service	15	12	18	17
Clerical	3	6	0	1
Medium level production	37	29	37	33
Low level production	14	8	8	6
Agriculture	6	5	23	16
MOTHER'S WORK STATUS				
Worked full-time	40	41	25	37
Worked part-time	13	15	10	13
Homemaker	41	41	63	48
FAMILY/HOUSEHOLD INCOME				
Median income	$27,030	$33,180	$20,900	$31,350

This, not surprisingly, translates into drop-outs coming from homes with a lower average household income. Across the province, the overall difference amounts to over $6,000, with non drop-outs reporting a median family income while they were in secondary school of $33,180 and drop-outs reporting a median family income of $27,030. Among Franco-Ontarians, the difference is much greater and amounts to over $10,000, with non drop-outs reporting a median family income of $31,350 and drop-outs $20,900.

Aside from the differences in occupation accounting for family income differences between the families of drop-outs and non drop-outs, the presence of a mother in the labour force can also have a large impact on family income. While this cannot be ruled out as an explanation for family income differences across the province, the fact that, as Table 2 shows, the same proportion of mothers of drop-outs and non drop-outs across the province were in the labour force during the time that respondents were in high school would tend to limit this possibility. Possibly, mothers of non drop-outs had better paying jobs than those of drop-outs, but this would be unlikely to reduce the income gap by a significant amount.

The relative absence of Franco-Ontarian mothers of drop-outs in the labour force, compared with non drop-outs does probably account for some of the much larger difference in household income between the two Franco-Ontarian groups. Even taking this factor into account, however, the income level of families of Franco-Ontarian drop-outs were still well below those of non drop-outs.

B. Other Background Factors

As a society that has traditionally welcomed immigrants, a significant minority of school age children are likely to be from immigrant families. This situation raises the obvious question of the extent to which being an immigrant has an effect on the likelihood of dropping out. When this issue is examined, however, coming to Canada as a child or during school years is not strongly associated with dropping out. In all, 10% of those who dropped out say they were born outside of Canada; nevertheless 12% of non drop-outs were also born outside of Canada.

Ethnic background is also not strongly associated with dropping out. The largest group of drop-outs and non drop-outs give their ethnic origin as British. This is as one would expect, given the substantial proportion of those of British origin in Ontario. The only difference of any note is the slightly higher incidence of those of Mediterranean origin in the ranks of the non drop-outs. Interestingly, there is no difference in the proportion of non drop-outs and drop-outs who are Franco-Ontarians and who were interviewed as a part of the province-wide survey. This suggests that the Franco-Ontarian drop-out rate may not be very different from that of the province overall.

(The lack of an impact of immigration and ethnicity on the likelihood of being a drop-out must, however, be considered a tentative finding. In order to definitively draw these conclusions, we would need to undertake a sample that would not set quotas for drop-outs.)

While the great majority of young people, both drop-outs and non drop-outs, come from homes where both parents are present, Table 3 indicates that the living arrangements of young people while they are attending secondary school is linked, to some extent, to whether or not a young person completes his/her education. Those who come from homes where both parents are present are somewhat more likely to complete high school than are those where a parent is absent.

Table 3

FAMILY LIVING ARRANGEMENTS DURING HIGH SCHOOL OF DROP-OUTS AND NON DROP-OUTS

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %
Respondent and both parents at home	71	83	83	90
Parents divorced - respondent living with mother/father	16	9	10	6
Respondent living with one parent or a relative	5	4	3	4
Living on own/with friend	5	3	4	1

III. CONSEQUENCES OF DROPPING OUT

A. Employment Situation

Although as Table 4 shows, drop-outs are as likely to be in the labour force as non drop-outs, there are some clear consequences of dropping out. To begin with, drop-outs, across the province overall and among Franco-Ontarians are more likely to have been unemployed in the past. In fact, across the province, 49% have been unemployed in the past compared with 38% of non drop-outs. At the same time, among those who have been unemployed, drop-outs are likely to have been unemployed more frequently in the past five years (drop-outs - 1.81 times, non drop-outs - 1.32 times). Drop-outs are also more likely to have spent more time unemployed over the last five years. As Table 4 shows, for the province overall, this amounts to an average of 10.4 months over the last five years, compared with 5.6 months among non drop-outs.

Table 4

EMPLOYMENT SITUATION OF DROP-OUTS AND NON DROP-OUTS

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %
LABOUR FORCE STATUS				
Employed full-time	65	68	60	64
Employed part-time	9	10	12	12
Unemployed/given up looking	10	3	12	4
Homemaker	14	5	14	6
Full-time student	1	13	2	12
Unemployed in past	49	38	54	34
Not unemployed in past	51	62	46	66
LAST TIME UNEMPLOYED				
More than five years ago	28	26	29	19
One to five years ago	45	44	38	35
Within past year	27	29	32	32
Median time unemployed in last five years (months)	10.4	5.6	7.9	4.4
Number of times unemployed in last five years	1.81	1.32	1.55	1.22

The current situation also shows that for drop-outs, both across the province overall and among Franco-Ontarians, although a significant proportion have jobs, the number unemployed is well above the levels for non drop-outs.

The labour force situation of drop-outs and non drop-outs is further clarified when gender differences are considered. As Table 5 makes clear, the apparent lack of distinction between drop-outs and non drop-outs regarding labour force participation conceals major gender based differences between drop-outs and non drop-outs. Male drop-outs are more likely to be full-time in the labour force than are non drop-outs, primarily because a significant minority of non drop-outs report that they are full-time students. Female drop-outs, on the other hand, are much less likely to be in the labour force than are non drop-outs primarily because they are more likely to be homemakers.

Table 5

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN LABOUR FORCE
PARTICIPATION FOR DROP-OUTS AND NON DROP-OUTS

ONTARIO-WIDE

	DROP-OUT		NON DROP-OUT	
	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %
Employed full-time	81	49	72	64
Employed part-time	6	11	9	12
Unemployed/given up looking	8	8	2	2
Homemaker	0	29	0	11
Full-time student	2	1	16	10

FRANCO-ONTARIANS

	DROP-OUT		NON DROP-OUT	
	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %
Employed full-time	82	39	71	56
Employed part-time	7	17	12	12
Unemployed/given up looking	10	12	7	2
Homemaker	0	28	0	13
Full-time student	1	2	10	15

While homemakers are likely to have children and thus be in a more difficult situation regarding work, the greater tendency of drop-outs to be homemakers compared with non drop-outs may also arise from the fact that being drop-outs they lack the skills to obtain a job that would pay for day care and provide a reasonable income. As a later section will indicate, female drop-outs are somewhat more likely to be married than are female non drop-outs, but the difference in the proportion married is unlikely, on its own, to account for the much greater proportion of drop-outs who are homemakers compared with non drop-outs.

B. Occupation and Income

Just as there are costs in terms of access to the labour force and ability to stay continuously in the labour force arising from dropping out, there are also differences between drop-outs and non drop-outs in terms of current occupation and to some extent the income derived from that occupation.

Table 6 shows that drop-outs are much less likely to be found in professional, technical, and cultural activities. These are traditionally the types of jobs that require fairly high levels of education; however, drop-outs, certainly among the population overall, are as likely as non drop-outs to hold managerial type positions or to be self-employed. Further, drop-outs tend to be more concentrated in low level service occupations, such as cashiers, and in blue collar jobs.

Table 6

OCCUPATION AND INCOME OF DROP-OUTS AND NON DROP-OUTS

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %
OCCUPATION				
Professional/technical/ cultural	3	23	5	17
Manager/owner	9	10	6	10
Medium level service	4	9	6	7
Low level service	24	12	32	26
Medium level office	5	13	2	4
Low level office	9	10	4	13
Medium level production	28	16	25	16
Low level production	16	6	14	5
Agriculture	3	1	6	3
PERSONAL INCOME				
Less than $5,000	21	16	20	23
$5,000 - $9,999	16	10	17	11
$10,000 - $14,999	17	15	18	12
$15,000 - $19,999	15	13	16	12
$20,000 - $24,999	12	17	11	17
$25,000 - $29,999	7	11	7	9
$30,000 - $39,999	9	13	10	8
$40,000 - $49,999	2	4	1	4
$50,000 and over	1	3	2	3
MEDIAN INCOME	$13,888	$18,890	$13,940	$16,350
AVERAGE INCOME	$15,720	$19,490	$15,620	$18,470

The differences in personal income between drop-outs and non drop-outs shown in Table 6 also point out the financial costs involved in dropping out -- and after 30 years of age the difference will become more pronounced. Among Ontario residents overall, non drop-outs' average income is $5,000 more than that of drop-outs, while among Franco-Ontarians the difference amounts to approximately $2,500. The smaller difference among Franco-Ontarians arises from the lower average income of non drop-outs.

These figures change somewhat when the personal incomes of only those with full-time jobs are considered. Table 7 shows the difference between drop-outs and non drop-outs narrows to $4,000 among the Ontario sample and increases to over $3,600 among Franco-Ontarians. Again the cost of dropping out remains significant.

Table 7

AVERAGE INCOME OF THOSE EMPLOYED FULL-TIME

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Drop-Out	Non Drop-Out	Drop-Out	Non Drop-Out
Median personal income	$18,703	$22,705	$18,369	$22,053
Average personal income	$19,910	23,750	$19,850	$23,030

Although a detailed analysis of income for each occupational category shown earlier in Table 6 is not possible because of the small cell sizes of some of the occupations, and therefore cannot be definitive, an examination of these categories reveals that the differences between drop-outs' and non drop-outs' income is fairly small for service, office, and production jobs, but is substantial for professional, technical, self-employed, and managerial occupations. Presumably, many jobs in production work are unionized and therefore wage scales are set by job class and this would help to level incomes of drop-outs and non drop-outs. In low level service and low level office work, minimum wages are often paid and this would also have a levelling effect on the wages of drop-outs and non drop-outs.

Although the data tentatively support that there may be only limited income differences for low level office and service work and for production work, it will be recalled from Table 6 that comparatively few non drop-outs were found in these positions, and more were in the upper level white collar occupations. Thus, even if income differences in lower level jobs between drop-outs and non drop-outs were limited, non drop-outs would still have higher average incomes because more of them were found in the higher paying jobs.

C. Gender Differences in Occupation and Income

In addition to occupation and income differences between drop-outs and non drop-outs, there are also gender based differences. Table 8 shows that while neither male nor female drop-outs in the Ontario-wide sample are likely to be in professional positions, females are more likely to be found in low level service positions and, to some extent, low level office work, and males in medium level production jobs.

Non drop-outs, on the other hand, both male and female, are more likely to be found in professional and technical positions.

Interestingly, non drop-out females are found strongly represented in almost all occupational categories, with the exception of production work and agriculture. The implication here is that drop-outs, especially females, are more likely than non drop-outs to be "ghettoized" into a few types of jobs. The Franco-Ontarian sample also tends to support this point of view, since over half of the female drop-outs are found in low level service positions.

Table 8

GENDER DIFFERENCES BETWEEN OCCUPATION AND PERSONAL INCOME AMONG DROP-OUTS AND NON DROP-OUTS

	ONTARIO-WIDE			
	Drop-out		Non drop-out	
	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %
OCCUPATION				
Professional/technical	4	3	25	20
Self-employed/manager	10	7	12	7
Medium level service	2	7	5	12
Low level service	14	38	11	15
Medium level office	3	7	7	19
Low level office	2	18	2	19
Medium level production	42	7	25	5
Low level production	19	11	9	2
Agriculture	4	1	2	1
PERSONAL INCOME FOR FULL-TIME WORKERS ONLY				
Median	$21,000	$15,227	$25,714	$20,305
Average	$22,200	$15,970	$26,220	$20,880
PERSONAL INCOME FOR TOTAL SAMPLE				
Median	$18,684	$8,842	$21,212	$16,838
Average	$20,130	$11,330	$21,410	$17,500

Table 8 -- Continued

	FRANCO-ONTARIANS			
	Drop-out		Non drop-out	
	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %
OCCUPATION				
Professional/technical	3	7	16	18
Self-employed/manager	6	6	11	9
Medium level service	6	6	2	13
Low level service	20	53	25	28
Medium level office	0	6	6	2
Low level office	2	7	2	25
Medium level production	39	2	26	3
Low level production	18	9	6	3
Agriculture	6	6	5	0
PERSONAL INCOME FOR FULL-TIME WORKERS ONLY:				
Median	$21,607	$13,214	$23,928	$20,178
Average	$22,690	$13,950	$25,860	$19,290
PERSONAL INCOME FOR TOTAL SAMPLE:				
Median	$19,347	$ 8,804	$19,464	$12,000
Average	$20,630	$10,460	$21,190	$13,510

The predominance of female drop-outs in certain types of low level occupations probably accounts for the lower average personal income that full-time labour force participants receive compared with non drop-outs. Similarly, the greater concentration of male non drop-outs in professional positions also accounts for the difference in full-time income between male drop-outs and non drop-outs.

The second average income figure displayed in Table 8 is the total average income for each category, not just those in the labour force, and a sharp drop in the average income of female drop-outs compared with non drop-outs is apparent when the average income of those in the labour force is compared with the total average income of each category. The point to be made here is that because more female drop-outs are not in the labour force compared with male drop-outs, their overall average income in a group is very low.

Further analysis was carried out to determine whether any relationship exists between respondents' personal income and their families' income during the time respondents were in high school. As it turns out, the greater the family income at the time they attended high school, the greater their personal income is today. This holds true for both drop-outs and non drop-outs. Notwithstanding this, non drop-outs who are employed full-time earn more personal income than do drop-outs who come from families that had the same household income during their high school years

D. Marital Status

A further factor separating drop-outs and non drop-outs is marital status. Drop-outs, both across the province as a whole and among the Franco-Ontarian sample, are more likely to be married, or to have been married, than are non drop-outs. The fact that drop-outs in the sample are approximately one year older than non drop-outs has some obvious effect on the difference in marital status, but when this is controlled, drop-outs still marry at an earlier age than do non drop-outs.

Table 9

MARITAL STATUS OF DROP-OUTS AND NON DROP-OUTS

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %
MALE				
Single	59	74	51	59
Married	37	26	46	39
Separated/divorced/widowed	4	0	3	2
FEMALE				
Single	40	57	30	44
Married	47	39	65	54
Separated/divorced/widowed	13	4	5	2

One of the most likely explanations for this is that those pursuing higher education are often likely to postpone marriage until they have completed their studies. Drop-outs are, of course, not in this situation and have no such barriers to their marrying.

One consequence of drop-outs marrying at an earlier age, and presumably starting a family, however, is that it becomes more difficult to contemplate returning to complete an education.

IV. ATTITUDES TOWARD EDUCATION

A. The Importance of Education

While, as Table 10 indicates, both drop-outs and non drop-outs believe a good education is important in terms of job opportunities or advancement, non drop-outs are more likely than drop-outs to stress that a good education is very important. This is especially the case with the non drop-outs across the province. The Franco-Ontarian groups are somewhat closer together in terms of their perceptions.

Table 10

IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION FOR DROP-OUTS AND NON DROP-OUTS

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %
Very important	62	85	62	74
Somewhat important	32	14	32	24
Not too important	4	1	6	2
Not at all important	2	0	0	0

The difference between drop-outs and non drop-outs is perhaps not surprising, given the different educational experiences of the two groups. Possibly drop-outs have developed this attitude subsequent to their dropping out, either as a rationale for dropping out or because they believe that they have not been adversely affected by dropping out. It is also possible, though, that the somewhat lesser emphasis on education recorded here was a factor in the decision to drop out. The data obviously cannot provide a definitive answer.

There are some significant gender differences on this issue. Male drop-outs are much less likely than female ones to believe that an education is very important. Among both the province-wide sample and the Franco-Ontarian sample, only 54% of males compared with 70% of females say a good education is very important. Among non drop-outs, while males are still somewhat less likely to believe a good education is very important, the gender differences are 5% and 8% for the province-wide and the Franco-Ontarian samples, respectively.

B. Perceptions of Personal Experience

Although a majority of both drop-outs and non drop-outs tend to evaluate the quality of the education they received in high school as "excellent" or "good", drop-outs are, as Table 11 makes clear, less positive. This is especially true for the province-wide sample. Interestingly, Franco-Ontarians generally evaluate the quality of their education highly and only a 10% difference separates the two Franco-Ontarian groups in terms of evaluating their education as "excellent" or "good". In fact, Franco-Ontarian drop-outs are nearly as positive on this dimension as non drop-outs across the province overall. This is not a factor of a difference in the type of school attended. Those Franco-Ontarians who attended a public school, rather than a separate school, are, in fact, more likely to say their experience was "excellent" or "good".

Table 11

PERCEPTION OF QUALITY OF EDUCATION RECEIVED

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %
Excellent	12	23	17	18
Good	48	58	60	69
Only fair	29	16	17	10
Poor	10	2	6	3

In terms of gender differences, male drop-outs in the province-wide sample are less likely than their female counterparts to believe that the quality of the education they received was excellent or good (54% to 66%).

While a significant majority of both drop-outs and non drop-outs evaluate their high school education in a positive manner, four in ten drop-outs from the province-wide sample and close to a quarter of the Franco-Ontarian sample believe their education was only fair or poor. Those who took this position, both drop-outs and non drop-outs, were asked to give their main reason for their dissatisfaction.

As Table 12 makes clear, drop-outs and non drop-outs give somewhat different reasons for their dissatisfaction with the education they received. Among drop-outs, the single largest group of comments deal with teachers. Over four in ten comments from the province-wide sample relate to this issue, as do close to this number among the Franco-Ontarian sample. Non drop-outs, on the other hand and as Table 12 shows, are more likely to complain about the courses rather than the teachers. Approximately half of all comments non drop-outs make are some form of complaint about courses, compared with four in ten drop-outs from the province-wide sample and one in three Franco-Ontarian drop-outs.

One major complaint from drop-outs from the province-wide sample is that teachers did not care about the students. A few comments from the verbatim responses illustrate this. One respondent commented on the "Lack of enthusiasm on the part of teachers"; another that "Teachers did not care, I was slow in school...needed help, but no one gave it"; while another stated that "Teachers didn't show any interest in the students".

Table 12

REASON FOR DISSATISFACTION WITH QUALITY OF EDUCATION RECEIVED

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %
Teachers	41	27	37	22
Attitudes of teachers	19	14	28	4
Teachers - other	21	13	9	18
Courses	39	50	33	55
Not available/not in depth	24	21	24	22
Subjects/material Not relevant	15	29	9	33
Disliked school	7	10	4	4
Student/teacher ratio	4	0	6	4
Other	6	11	13	15
Don't know/no response	4	3	6	0

Most of the other comments relating to teachers are also of a negative nature. Teachers having bad attitudes, not imposing enough discipline, and showing favouritism, as well as the poor quality of teaching are some of the other comments.

In the second group of comments dealing with courses, two issues emerge: first, the kinds of courses a student wanted were not available or the courses were not in-depth enough. Verbatim comments on this subject include: "Didn't have courses available that I was interested in"; "Didn't have a wide variety of subjects aside from the basics"; and "The teachers were excellent but courses were lacking in depth". The second set of comments deals with the problem that courses were not relevant and did not prepare one for the future. Comments dealing with this complaint include: "It did not get me ready for anything. After I left school everything I was taught did not help me. I had to start at the beginning again"; and "I feel it did not prepare me enough to cope with the outside world".

The negative comments, and presumably opinions, on the part of drop-outs regarding teachers were further confirmed when respondents were asked to evaluate directly the extent to which teachers and staff at the respondent's high school cared both for the students and for the respondent. While four in ten non drop-outs in the Ontario-wide sample shown in Table 13 say teachers and staff cared a great deal about students, only 25% of drop-outs believe this to be true. Moreover, while only a quarter of drop-outs in the Ontario-wide sample believe teachers and staff cared about them personally, 45% of non drop-outs hold this view.

Table 13 also shows, however, that Franco-Ontarian drop-outs are somewhat different from their counterparts across the province and are close to the level of evaluation made by non drop-outs. This higher evaluation is not a function of Franco-Ontarians being more likely to attend separate schools, since there is virtually no difference in evaluation between those who attended a public school and those who went to a separate school.

Table 13

EVALUATIONS OF TEACHERS/STAFF
BY DROP-OUTS AND NON DROP-OUTS

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %
TEACHERS/STAFF CARE ABOUT STUDENTS				
A great deal	23	40	39	56
Somewhat	55	55	49	39
Not too much	17	5	10	4
Not at all	5	0	2	1
TEACHERS/STAFF CARE ABOUT YOU				
A great deal	26	45	38	48
Somewhat	47	48	50	43
Not too much	18	5	10	6
Not at all	9	1	2	2

There is, though, a gender based factor at work and Table 14 shows this. While the province-wide sample shows virtually no difference by sex, Franco-Ontarian male drop-outs are much more negative than females about the teachers and staff, both in terms of their caring about students generally and about the respondent. In fact, their levels of perception are very close to those of drop-outs across the province overall.

Table 14

EVALUATIONS OF TEACHERS/STAFF BY DROP-OUTS AND NON DROP-OUTS

	FRANCO-ONTARIANS SAMPLE ONLY			
	Male Drop-Out %	Female Drop-Out %	Male Non Drop-Out %	Female Non Drop-Out %
TEACHERS/STAFF CARE ABOUT STUDENTS				
A great deal	27	50	48	63
Somewhat	58	40	48	30
Not too much/at all	15	10	4	7
TEACHERS/STAFF CARE ABOUT YOU				
A great deal	28	48	46	51
Somewhat	56	45	43	43
Not too much/at all	16	8	11	6

V. TYPE OF SCHOOL, COURSES TAKEN, GRADES

A. Type of School Attended and Courses Taken

Table 15 compares the proportion of drop-outs to non drop-outs who attended the public school system compared with the separate system. Given the overwhelming proportion of drop-outs and non drop-outs, in the province-wide sample, who attended the public school system, it is clear that there is no strong relationship between being a drop-out and attending public school, although drop-outs are somewhat more likely to have attended a public school. Similarly, the Franco-Ontarian sample indicates that, while not surprisingly, more Franco-Ontarians attended separate schools than those from the province overall, Franco-Ontarian drop-outs are as likely to have attended public school as non drop-outs. The implication here is that those Ontario residents who attended public school were only slightly more likely to drop out than those who attended a separate school.

Table 15

TYPE OF SCHOOL ATTENDED AND COURSES TAKEN BY DROP-OUTS AND NON DROP-OUTS

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %
TYPE OF SCHOOL ATTENDED				
Public school	86	80	63	62
Separate school	11	14	34	32
Private school	2	5	3	6
TYPE OF COURSES TAKEN				
Advanced courses	20	61	22	57
General courses	62	35	71	38
Basic courses	16	3	6	3

The major factor at work in terms of schooling is type of program that a student was involved in rather than the type of school attended. As Table 15 also indicates, the majority of drop-outs were involved in taking general courses, while non drop-outs say they were involved in advanced courses. Few Ontario participants report taking basic courses; however, a majority of those that did are drop-outs.

While drop-outs in the province-wide sample are the most likely to have taken basic courses, there is a strong link between likelihood of having taken basic courses and age. In all, 27% of drop-outs between 25 and 30 years of age took basic courses, compared with 15% of those aged between 22 and 24 years, and 4% of those between ages 18 and 21 years.

B. Grades

In order to assess the impact of perceived school performance in terms of grade point average on the likelihood of dropping out, we asked respondents to estimate their overall average grade during their high school years. Although the most common grade that respondents received at high school was a "B", representing marks between 70 and 79, it is clear from Table 16 that drop-outs recall receiving somewhat lower grades than non do drop-outs. Drop-outs are less likely to recall being "A" students and more likely to recall being "C" students than are non drop-outs. This is especially the case for the province-wide sample; differences between Franco-Ontarian drop-outs and non drop-outs are somewhat less evident.

Table 16

GRADE-POINT AVERAGE DURING HIGH SCHOOL YEARS

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %
A - 80 and above	7	24	9	21
B - 70-79	46	59	64	64
C - 60-69	39	16	22	14
D - 50-59	6	1	4	2
F - Failed (volunteered)	1	0	2	0

The general trend for drop-outs to report lower grade point averages than non drop-outs also holds across the type of courses that respondents took. Thus, while those drop-outs who took advanced courses were more likely to report a higher grade-point average than other drop-outs, their reported grade-point average is still lower than that of non drop-outs who took advanced courses.

Female respondents generally say they had a higher grade-point average than do male respondents, a relationship that holds for drop-outs and non drop-outs in the province-wide sample. In all, 53% of male drop-outs reported average grades of a "C" or less, but only 38% of female drop-outs report such grades.

C. Choice of Courses

One of the issues that had been identified earlier as a reason for younger Ontario residents expressing dissatisfaction with the quality of their education was their belief that there was a lack of choice in terms of the courses that they could take. This is confirmed from responses to a question put to respondents that asked directly about choice.

Two positions were put to respondents: the first was that there were too many elective choices in courses and that if there were fewer choices attention could be focused on ensuring that students know the basic subjects well. The second position was that while it is important to have some courses students must take, students should be given as much choice as possible in order to expose them to a wide range of ideas and experiences.

In response to these positions, just under three-quarters of both drop-outs (73%) and non drop-outs (72%) indicate that choice should be given in courses. Among Franco-Ontarians, 70% of drop-outs and 78% of non drop-outs prefer the choice option.

VI. SITUATION AND ATTITUDES OF DROP-OUTS

A. Grade and Age Left High School

Drop-outs left secondary school at diverse ages. While a few respondents report that they left at ages 14 and 15, two-thirds of drop-outs left high school between the ages of 16 and 17. As Table 17 also shows, the median age for leaving is close to 17 years. As far as the grade that drop-outs report leaving at, the most common is Grade 11, but approximately half of drop-outs report leaving at either Grades 10 or 12.

Table 17

AGE DROPPED OUT AND GRADE AT THE TIME

	PROVINCE-WIDE SAMPLE %	FRANCO-ONTARIANS %
AGE		
14 years	2	4
15 years	9	6
16 years	34	29
17 years	33	36
18 years	18	19
19 years	3	2
20 years	1	4
MEDIAN AGE	16.64 years	16.81 years
GRADE		
9	8	8
10	29	25
11	39	42
12	21	22
13	2	3

There is some evidence that the size of community has an impact on the grade at which students drop out. Those living in larger communities report that they were older when they dropped out and were in a slightly higher grade. In all, 41% and 46% of the Ontario-wide respondents living in communities of less than 10,000 and between 10,000 and 99,999, respectively, report leaving school during Grade 9 or 10, compared with 34% and 30% of those living in communities of between 100,000 and one million and in the Toronto area, respectively. (This interpretation, though, assumes that respondents have not moved from one size of community to another since leaving high school.)

One of the major issues regarding the age and grade at which students drop out of school is that of the extent to which students fall behind their age grade and the impact of this on dropping out. Table 18 explores this issue and indicates that the majority of drop-outs appear to be within one grade of the grade they should be in given their age. Thus, for those who left school at age 16, for example, the great majority were in Grade 10 or 11, only 12% report that they were in Grade 9. Similarly, the majority of 17-year-olds were in Grades 11 and 12, only 18% were in a grade lower. There appears to be a greater discrepancy for those 18 years and above. A significant proportion of 18-year-olds (41%) were in Grade 11 or lower at the time they left high school. This suggests that the mismatch between age and grade may not become a critical issue until one reaches 18 years of age and possibly questions whether one can, in fact, complete high school. The lower part of Table 18 reports essentially the same results for the Franco-Ontarian sample.

Table 18

AGE OF LEAVING SCHOOL

ONTARIO-WIDE

AGE	Nine %	Ten %	Eleven %	Twelve %	Thirteen %
14-15 years	30	51	19	0	0
16 years	12	46	37	5	0
17 years	1	17	55	24	2
18 years	2	6	33	53	6
19-20 years	0	15	15	55	0

FRANCO-ONTARIANS

AGE	Nine %	Ten %	Eleven %	Twelve %	Thirteen %
14-15 years	42	37	16	5	0
16 years	9	38	50	3	0
17 years	4	17	50	25	4
18 years	0	11	40	45	5
19-20 years*	0	31	15	46	8

* Sample too small to be statistically reliable.

B. Reasons for Dropping Out

Respondents were asked to recall their main reason for leaving high school, and their responses can be grouped into three main types: those dealing with the desire to get a job; those dealing with some education related problem; and those dealing with personal problems. As Table 19 shows, respondents across the province are somewhat different from Franco-Ontarians in the reasons they give for leaving secondary school. For Ontarians generally, the single largest reason for dropping out deals with school related issues, while for Franco-Ontarians, the main concern is the desire to get a job. Approximately one in five reasons deal with a problem in one's personal life.

Table 19

MAIN REASONS FOR LEAVING HIGH SCHOOL

	ONTARIO-WIDE SAMPLE	FRANCO-ONTARIANS	ONTARIO-WIDE	
			Male %	Female %
School Related	43	30	48	38
Lack of interest/dislike/ boredom	24	19	26	22
Problems with teachers	7	4	9	5
Discipline problems	4	2	6	2
Courses offered	4	4	3	5
Poor grades	4	1	4	4
Work Related	27	40	36	18
Personal	23	22	12	34
Problem at home	12	8	8	15
Marriage/pregnancy	7	10	1	14
Financial problems	3	2	2	3
Moved	1	2	1	1

The major school related problems cited by drop-outs are that they found school boring or uninteresting or that they disliked school. Typical of these responses are the comments: "I had no interest so there was no point being there"; "Boredom of school generally"; "It was just too boring in school"; and "If I was more interested in what I was doing or if I was told why I was taking some of these things".

Other comments deal with teachers and here typical responses include: "There was a teacher who treated me like a mother, deciding what type of hair cut I should have and what clothes I should wear, so I quit"; and "Teachers, several that I did not like and they did not like me". Other school related reasons for dropping out include being expelled, skipping too many classes, and problems with courses. Some emphasize that the courses did not relate to the "outside world", a point a number of respondents made earlier when asked for their reasons for being dissatisfied with the quality of the education they received.

Work related comments all deal with being offered a job or with a desire to earn money or have a job. Typical comments on this subject were: "I wanted to get job experience"; "To go to work and get a job and finish my diploma at night school rather than going the whole year"; "I wanted to go in the real world"; and "I received a full-time job, I knew it was a good job so I decided to take it and leave school".

The two largest areas of personal problems deal with those at home or marriage and pregnancy. Home problems include the following types of situations: "Pressure at home"; "Left home due to domestic problems"; "Black-outs in class"; "Taken out of school because my father would not buy insurance"; "There was a death in the family and there were problems after that". The pregnancy and marriage reason is self-explanatory, but it is likely that when respondents give marriage as a reason, they are implying that they were, in fact, pregnant and married as a result of the pregnancy.

Those citing financial problems as their reason for leaving school usually had parents who were unable to support them through school. Thus comments included: "I only had a mom and she couldn't support me. We needed the money so I went to work".

Table 19 also shows that a number of gender differences exist in reasons given. Females are generally somewhat less likely to mention school related and work oriented reasons and focus more on personal factors, with problems at home, and marriage and pregnancy being the main reasons mentioned for leaving school. Although not shown, gender differences among Franco-Ontarians tend to follow those for Ontario overall.

In addition to being asked an unaided question dealing with reasons for leaving school, respondents were also asked to respond to a number of school related issues and to indicate how important each item was in their decision to leave school. Responses to these questions are found in Table 20.

Although no issue is overwhelmingly important, as suggested by the wide variety of unaided responses, a number of the items shown in Table 20 are quite important. In particular, boring classes are the most frequently cited item among both Ontario residents overall and among Franco-Ontarians; a majority of the Ontario sample and a near majority among Franco-Ontarians cite this as a "very" or "somewhat" important reason for their leaving. In addition, difficulty with the material to be studied was cited by a near majority of Franco-Ontarians as important, while skipping classes and falling too far behind to make up the work was also of importance to a significant minority of respondents.

Table 20

IMPORTANCE OF VARIOUS SCHOOL RELATED REASONS IN DECISION TO LEAVE SCHOOL

ONTARIO-WIDE

REASONS	Very Important %	Somewhat Important %	Not Too/ Not At All Important %
Some classes very boring	23	32	45
Skipped classes and fell behind	20	18	61
Did not get along with a teacher	16	13	71
Had trouble coping with material had to learn	11	19	70
One course too hard	9	17	74

FRANCO-ONTARIANS

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Too/ Not At All Important
Some classes very boring	24	25	51
Had trouble coping with material had to learn	20	26	54
Skipped classes and fell behind	10	22	63
One course too hard	11	25	64
Did not get along well with teacher	14	16	70

There are few differences in responses separating men and women in terms of the importance they attribute to each reason. The only differences are the greater likelihood of Franco-Ontarian women compared with men to report difficulty with coping with the material they had to study, of Franco-Ontarian males compared with females being more likely to say there was a teacher they did not get along with, and of males compared with their female counterparts from the province-wide sample being more likely to say that their classes were boring.

Finally in terms of reasons for leaving school, as a summary question respondents were asked to choose between leaving school in order to get a job and earn money, or leaving because they no longer wanted to be in school as the more important reason for leaving school. When put this way, wanting to get a job was selected by a near majority of Ontario residents (49%) and a majority of Franco-Ontarians (58%), while respectively 32% and 72% of these groups select not wanting to stay in school as the more important reason, and 15% of both groups volunteer that neither of these reasons was of special importance. While, this position is consistent for the Franco-Ontarian sample in terms of their response to the open-ended question on why they left school, among Ontario residents overall this response is in contrast to the greater emphasis respondents put on school related problems as a reason for leaving school. For Ontario residents overall these data suggest school problems and the desire to get a job are both important factors, each possibly reinforcing the decision to leave school.

Consistent with earlier data, males (56%) are more likely than females (42%) to opt for the job reason across the province as are Franco-Ontario males (64%) compared with females (52%).

C. Work and Leaving School

The previous section has indicated that the desire to get a job appears to play a significant role in the decision of students to leave secondary school. An important issue in this regard is the extent to which having some type of job was instrumental in the decision to leave school.

Table 21 indicates that a narrow majority of Ontario respondents and Franco-Ontarians report that they actually had a job of some kind prior to leaving school, while approximately four in ten report that they had to go out and look for a job. When demographic variations are considered, however, Ontario males (61%) were much more likely than females (41%) to have a job to go to, as were Franco-Ontarian males (69%) compared with their female counterparts (48%). (For some females this question did not apply, since they left school because they were pregnant and presumably were not going to get a job. This should be taken into account in interpreting the lower incidence of females reporting that they had a job to go to.)

Table 21

JOB STATUS AND LEAVING SCHOOL

	ONTARIO-WIDE %	FRANCO-ONTARIANS %
JOB STATUS		
Had job prior to leaving	51	58
Had to look for a job	45	40
Not applicable	4	2
JOB SEARCH NEEDS		
Had part-time/summer job	65	61
Went and found a job	31	39
ROLE HAVING A JOB PLAYED IN DECISION TO LEAVE		
Very large part	22	26
Large part	38	17
Not too much of a part	18	38
No part at all	22	26

As Table 21 makes clear, among those who had a job to go to, a substantial majority -- close to two-thirds -- report that this job was a part-time or summer job they already had. Most of the remaining drop-outs report that they had to find a job. Taking all drop-outs together, including those who had to look for a job, one in three drop-outs went to the part-time or summer job that they already had immediately after leaving high school.

Although, as noted above, males were more likely to have a job to go to, among those who report that they had a job to go to, females (74%) in the Ontario-wide sample are more likely than males (59%) to say the job they went to was one that they already had. In other words, males are more likely to say they went out and found a job in order to leave high school. No such gender based relationship exists among Franco-Ontarians.

A significant proportion of drop-outs earlier indicated that they had left school because they wanted to get into the labour force. This finding is confirmed when respondents were asked directly how big a part having a job played in their decision to leave school. As Table 21 notes, 60% of Ontario residents believe that having a job played a large part in their decision to leave school compared to 43% of Franco-Ontarian respondents.

When taken together, these findings suggest that access to a job is a factor in deciding to drop out, and therefore if jobs are less available for youth, the incidence of dropping out may be lower.

D. Actions That Would Have Enabled Students to Stay in School

Some measure of the strength of feeling that drop-outs had about leaving school comes from the fact that a majority of respondents report that there were no actions or circumstances that would have persuaded them to stay in school. Fully 60% of Ontario residents and 72% of Franco-Ontarians take this strong position. At the same time, at least across the province overall, males (66%) are somewhat more likely than females (55%) to say that nothing could have persuaded them to change their mind. Among Franco-Ontarians, however, there is little difference by gender.

Those who say some actions or circumstances could have prevented their leaving offer a wide variety of activities or circumstances that could have helped, and these are displayed in Table 22. The most frequent comments, approximately one-third, deal with school type issues. The most common of these relate to comments about courses being more interesting. Typical comments of this nature include: "A little bit more excitement in the classroom. It was too boring"; "If teaching had been more interesting and less boring"; and "If courses had been more challenging and less repetitive, I would have stayed". Nearly as frequent as comments on uninteresting courses were those regarding student/teacher relations. Typical comments of this nature included: "If it wasn't for the teacher I would have finished high school"; "If I'd felt teachers had shown more interest in me as a person"; "I was very slow in reading"; and " If additional help was given and teachers spent more time, then I would have stayed in school". A third set of comments relating to school also deals with courses and here the comments are focused on the courses being offered, the limited choices available, and the certain types of courses a student wanted to take that were not offered at the school.

Table 22

ACTIONS OR CIRCUMSTANCES THAT WOULD HAVE PERSUADED DROP-OUTS TO STAY IN SCHOOL

	ONTARIO-WIDE %	FRANCO-ONTARIANS %
SCHOOL	36	30
Courses more interesting	14	2
Teacher/student relations	12	12
Different types of courses	9	12
GUIDANCE REQUIRED	23	28
At school	17	21
From parents	6	7
BETTER GRADES	1	4
FAMILY SITUATION	10	7
FINANCES	9	9
OTHER	20	19

The second group of comments shown in Table 22 deals with the need for some form of guidance. Approximately a quarter of respondents offer this type of comment. Responses were broken down into those directed toward the school and those toward the home. The importance of the school environment is shown by the fact that three-quarters of these comments focus on school rather than on home. Comments dealing with school include: "If I had more support from the school toward the career I wanted to pursue"; " If someone had counselled me better in a way that would have pointed out how it (school) would help me later in my career"; and "Guidance counsellor failed to inform me that Brock University would have accepted me out of Grade 12". Home type comments include: "If my parents had taken more interest in my education". Related to parental guidance are comments that deal with family situations and problems at home. Thus respondents comment: " I would have stayed in school had there not been problems at home"; and "If I had a better relationship at home".

When gender differences in response are considered, the only major variation is in terms of males in the province-wide sample being more likely than females (16% to 4%) to make comments about the range of courses offered. Presumably males wanted courses of a technical nature and some of the comments suggest this.

Further evidence of the extent to which respondents recall being committed to leaving school comes from the fact that perceptions of the extent to which they believe that teachers and staff did not care about them are not linked to a belief regarding actions or circumstances that could have prevented respondents from leaving school. Thus 66% of those in the Ontario-wide sample who say teachers cared a great deal about them also say no actions could have prevented them from leaving high school. Only among those who believe teachers did not care for them at all is there evidence of a relationship and only 41% say no actions could have prevented their leaving. Possibly this group felt very alienated from school and teachers, and some interest on the part of teachers might have kept them in high school. No such link, however, is evident among Franco-Ontarians. This does raise the issue of whether schools, by showing more interest in individual students could, in fact, reduce the drop-out rate.

Finally, when the current age of respondents is considered, there is no evidence that more recent drop-outs are more or less likely than their older counterparts to believe that some action could have persuaded them to stay in high school. In fact, at least among the Ontario-wide sample, those respondents 24 years of age or under (68%) are more likely to believe that nothing could have changed their mind compared with those aged between 25 and 30 years (54%). It is, of course, impossible to determine if this response is a result of aging or if younger people dropping out in recent years are simply more determined to leave than they were 10 years ago or so.

E. Contact with School About Leaving

A further sign of the extent to which respondents wanted to leave school comes from the fact that a majority, as Table 23 makes clear, did not report speaking to any member of the school, while only approximately four in ten respondents report that they had spoken to someone in the school.

Table 23

SCHOOL CONTACTS PRIOR TO LEAVING

	ONTARIO-WIDE %	FRANCO-ONTARIANS %
CONTACT		
Spoke to staff	37	44
Did not speak to staff	62	56
WHEN LEFT SCHOOL		
During break period	40	35
During term	59	64

One of the possible reasons that a majority of drop-outs did not speak to anyone at the school was because they decided to leave school during a break period, such as the summer. As Table 23 also shows, over one-third of drop-outs say they left school during a break period, while a significant majority say they left during the term.

When these two results are cross tabulated, as they are in Table 24, then it is clear that even among those who left school during the term, and presumably when they would have had an opportunity to speak to staff at their school, only 44% of Ontarians generally and 50% of Franco-Ontarians report that they spoke to staff. Table 24 also shows that a significant minority of those who left during a break also spoke to school staff. This suggests that they had contemplated leaving during the previous term and had spoken to staff about it and had either decided to finish the term or had made their decision to leave during the break.

Table 24

TIME LEFT SCHOOL AND CONTACT PRIOR TO LEAVING

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Spoke To Staff %	Did Not Speak To Staff %	Spoke To Staff %	Did Not Speak To Staff %
TIME LEFT				
During break period	25	75	34	66
During term	44	55	50	50

Although a minority of respondents report that they spoke to school staff prior to leaving, there is little evidence that those who say that some activities or circumstances could have persuaded them to stay were more likely to speak to staff. Among those in the Ontario-wide sample, only 43% say they spoke to a staff member, while only 36% of Franco-Ontarians say this. Clearly, even those who believe some type of action could have helped their situation did not try to contact staff.

The type of problems students were facing is, of course, a factor in the likelihood of approaching a member of the school staff, but even here, as Table 25 shows, there is no strong relationship between the problem that a student faced and whether or not he/she discussed with school staff the possibility of leaving. Certainly among the problems that were directly school related, such as being bored with classes or disliking school, only 39% and 44%, respectively, of the Ontario-wide sample and the Franco-Ontarian sample report that they spoke to a staff member.

Table 25

REASONS FOR LEAVING AND CONTACT WITH STAFF

ONTARIO-WIDE

	Start Work/ Career %	Bored/ Disliked School %	Problems With a Teacher %	Married/ Pregnant %	Personal/ Home %	Total %
CONTACT						
Spoke to staff	32	39	34	35	44	37
Did not speak to staff	68	61	66	65	56	63

FRANCO-ONTARIANS

	Start Work/ Career %	Bored/ Disliked School %	Problems With a Teacher %	Married/ Pregnant %	Personal/ Home %	Total %
CONTACT						
Spoke to staff	36	44	*	65	47	45
Did not speak to staff	64	56		35	53	55

* Number of cases is too small to be statistically reliable.

Gender differences regarding those who were in contact with school staff prior to leaving are evident within the Franco-Ontarian sample, where 52% of females report speaking to a staff member compared with 37% among males. Among the Ontario-wide sample, however, gender differences are minimal.

The kind of school a student went to, be it public or separate, is not strongly linked to whether or not they spoke to a staff member, but the type of program a student was in is linked to speaking to a staff member. Of those who say they took advanced courses, among the Ontario sample, 49% report speaking to a staff member, compared with 36%

and 24%, respectively, who were in general and basic courses. Much the same relationship is apparent for Franco-Ontarians where 56% and 39%, respectively, who took advanced and general courses report speaking to a staff member. (The sample size for those attending basic courses is too small to be relied upon.) A somewhat similar relationship holds when grade-point average is concerned. Those who received the lowest grades tend to be the least likely to have spoken to staff members.

Finally, in terms of the factors associated with a person speaking to a staff member, the extent to which a respondent recalls feeling that the teachers and staff at the school did not care about them is not strongly related to whether or not they spoke to a staff member at the school. Among those who believe that the staff cared not at all about them, 34% say they spoke to a staff person, while among those who believe the school staff cared a great deal about them, only 41% say they spoke to a staff member. Much the same type of finding is apparent among Franco-Ontarians.

Among those who did speak to a staff member, the most common people spoken to, as Table 26 points out, are guidance counsellors, and principals and vice-principals. Across the province, guidance counsellors are more likely to be approached than are principals and vice-principals, while among Franco-Ontarians, there is little difference in the proportion approaching each group. Few respondents report speaking to teachers. There is an interesting dynamic associated with gender differences in who is approached. Males in the Ontario-wide sample are as likely to report that they spoke to principals and vice-principals as spoke to guidance counsellors, while females are more likely to report speaking to guidance counsellors. Table 26 reports these figures for the Ontario sample. Among the Franco-Ontarian sample, males are considerably more likely to approach principals and vice-principals, while females are more likely to approach guidance counsellors. Possibly females find it more difficult to approach principals and vice-principals and easier to deal with guidance counsellors.

Table 26

CONTACT WITH SCHOOL STAFF AND PERCEIVED LEVEL OF PERSUASION

			ONTARIO-WIDE	
	ONTARIO-WIDE	FRANCO-ONTARIANS	MALE	FEMALE
	%	%	%	%
WHO SPOKE TO				
Guidance counsellor	48	39	41	55
Principal/vice-principal	36	44	42	31
Teacher	11	17	13	9
Other (volunteered)	4	0	4	4
EXTENT PERSON TRIED TO PERSUADE THEM TO STAY				
A great deal	32	30	-	-
Somewhat	26	20	-	-
Not too much	22	24	-	-
Not at all	19	26	-	-

The extent to which respondents recall the staff person they spoke with as trying to persuade them to remain in school varies considerably, as Table 26 shows, but overall a near majority of Ontarians generally and Franco-Ontarians believe that the person they spoke with did not try too much or did not try at all to persuade them to change their mind. In all, fewer than one respondent in three believe that this person tried very hard to get the student to change his/her mind.

Although most respondents believe staff members did not try very hard to get them to change their mind, those who spoke with guidance counsellors are more likely to believe that they tried "very" or "somewhat" hard compared with those who spoke with principals or vice-principals (Table 27). Possibly guidance counsellors believe it is more their responsibility to try to persuade potential drop-outs to remain in school than do principals or vice-principals.

Table 27

PERSON SPOKEN TO AND EXTENT ENCOURAGED TO STAY

ONTARIO-WIDE

	Very Hard %	Somewhat Hard %	Not Too/ Not At All Hard %
Principal/vice-principal	25	18	55
Guidance counsellor	34	30	36

FRANCO-ONTARIANS

	Very Hard %	Somewhat Hard %	Not At All Hard %
Principal/vice-principal	23	20	57
Guidance counsellor	46	17	37

In an earlier part of this report, it was noted that a substantial majority of respondents report that they believe teachers and staff at the high school they attended cared about them a "great deal" or "somewhat". When a similar question was put to respondents later in the questionnaire, this time concerning the extent to which they believe teachers cared about their leaving school, only about half of those in the two samples (as shown in Table 28) believe that teachers cared "a great deal" or "somewhat" about their leaving; only about one in six respondents, however, believe teachers cared "a great deal" about their leaving. The suggestion here is that respondents did not feel a particularly strong bond or any strong feeling of belonging in the sense that they believe the teaching staff cared about their welfare. The fact that this figure is somewhat more negative than the first measurement is likely a result of respondents, in the course of the interview, coming to reflect more negatively on their high school experiences. Both male and female respondents showed little difference in their perceptions on this issue.

Table 28

PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS' CONCERN AND PERSONAL RESPONSE TO LEAVING HIGH SCHOOL

	ONTARIO-WIDE %	FRANCO-ONTARIANS %
TEACHERS CARE ABOUT YOU LEAVING		
A great deal	15	17
Somewhat	36	31
Not much at all	17	23
Not at all	29	26
FEELINGS ABOUT LEAVING HIGH SCHOOL		
Very glad	20	15
Glad	45	46
Not too glad	21	29
Not at all glad	13	10

In line with the earlier finding that a majority of respondents did not discuss their leaving with staff at their high school, a majority also do not believe believe that any actions or circumstances could have made them change their mind about leaving. A significant proportion (65% of the Ontario sample, 61% of the Franco-Ontarian sample) of drop-outs, as Table 28 reports, say they felt "very glad" or "glad" when they left high school. Among males and females in both samples, differences in response are minimal.

There is, though, some variation in response depending upon a respondent's reported reasons for leaving high school. Those who report being most relieved about leaving were those who gave their reasons for leaving as finding school or classes boring or disliking school, in all 84% and 71% of this group in the Ontario-wide and Franco-Ontarian samples, respectively, claim that they were "very glad" or "glad" to leave high school. On the other hand, those who were least likely to report being glad were respondents who said that they left school for personal reasons related to problems at home. Among this group, only 37% and 40%, respectively of the Ontario-wide and Franco-Ontarian sample report being very glad or glad to leave home.

Interestingly, feelings about leaving school have no consistent impact on whether a student reports talking to a staff member at the school.

VII. LATER EDUCATION EXPERIENCES

A. Intention to Complete High School

Despite a substantial proportion of drop-outs reporting that they were glad to leave high school, just over half, as shown in Table 29, say that it was their intention to return and complete their high school education. Both males and females are as likely to say they intended to return to complete their education. The proportion of those claiming that they intended to return is, at least among the Ontario-wide sample, strongly influenced by the current age of the respondent. Younger drop-outs are more likely than older ones to report that they intended to return to complete high school.

While the intention to complete high school is not low, the proportion who report that they have actually finished high school is very low. As Table 29 indicates, only 18% of the Ontario-wide sample and 16% of the Franco-Ontarian sample report that they had actually completed high school at the time of the survey.

Table 29

LATER EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

	ONTARIO-WIDE %	FRANCO-ONTARIANS %
EDUCATION INTENTION UPON LEAVING HIGH SCHOOL		
Intended to return	53	53
Did not intend to return	45	47
COMPLETED		
Has completed	18	16
Has not completed	82	84
SUBSEQUENT EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES		
Some educational experiences	61	52
No educational experiences	39	48

Although a majority of respondents have some form of educational experience following their dropping out, Table 30 suggests that drop-outs do not continue their education unless they do so within a few years of dropping out. This is evident from the fact that those aged between 18 and 19 years are nearly as likely as older Ontario drop-outs to report some educational experience, while Franco-Ontarians are generally as likely to do so. The column in Table 30 showing the proportion of drop-outs who had completed high school shows a slightly different pattern. Here at least for Ontario residents overall, a greater number in their twenties have completed high school than those aged 18 and 19 years, and this is to be expected given that those in their twenties have had more time to complete high school. The relationship among Franco-Ontarians is less clear.

Table 30

IMPACT OF CURRENT AGE ON
LIKELIHOOD OF SOME SUBSEQUENT EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE
AND OF COMPLETING HIGH SCHOOL

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Some Subsequent Education %	Completed High School %	Some Subsequent Education %	Completed High School %
AGE				
18-19 years	54	10	54	15
20-21 years	59	25	68	32
22-24 years	67	22	53	3
25-27 years	57	15	47	19
28-30 years	63	19	49	16

Gender differences in subsequent education experience tend to be small, although males across Ontario (65%) are more likely to report some subsequent experience compared with females (56%). In the Franco-Ontarian sample, the relationship is reversed, with males (48%) being somewhat less likely to report experience than females (55%). Gender differences in high school completion are minimal and show males in both samples to be 3% more likely to report that they have completed high school.

B. Subsequent Educational Experience of Those Who Had Not Planned to Return

As noted earlier, a significant minority of drop-outs say that at the time they left high school, they never planned to go back to school. In fact, a majority of Ontario-wide respondents (53%) indicate that they had not intended to participate in any further schooling, but only a little over a third (37%) of Franco-Ontarian respondents report that they have some subsequent educational experience. In terms of completing high school, only 11% in both groups who had initially no intention of furthering their education actually report high school completion, well below the 24% and 22% reported by Ontario-wide and Franco-Ontarian respondents who say they intended to return to school later.

There are two points to be made from these data: first that many of those who leave school feeling they will never attend again eventually come to realize that education is necessary. Second, the strong feeling of not wanting to return to school does carry through to some extent and presumably acts as a barrier to further education and certainly to completing high school.

C. Further Educational Experiences

Among those who have taken courses, Table 31 indicates that technical and vocational courses, high school level courses in particular, as well as correspondence courses are the most frequently mentioned. Very few respondents report taking university courses. Differences between Franco-Ontarians and those in the province overall are also evident in Table 31; those across the province are more likely to have taken technical and vocational courses while Franco-Ontarians are more likely to have taken apprenticeship courses.

Table 31

COURSES TAKEN SINCE DROPPING OUT

	TOTAL SAMPLE		THOSE TAKING COURSES	
	Ontario-Wide %	Franco-Ontarians %	Ontario-Wide %	Franco-Ontarians %
Technical/vocational	23	14	38	28
High school level	22	18	37	34
Correspondence	13	12	21	23
Apprenticeship	4	6	7	12
University level	3	1	6	2
Other	6	6	11	12
No courses taken	39	48	-	-

Note: Percentages add to more than 100% because respondents were allowed up to three mentions.

While a substantial number of respondents report that they have had some subsequent educational experiences, only 15% of Ontario-wide and Franco-Ontarian respondents say they are currently attending or have signed up to take courses of some kind. Gender differences on this are minimal. Age differences, however, show considerable variation in involvement. In particular, as Table 32 shows, educational involvement drops as drop-outs age. Even between the ages of 18 and 19, though, less than 30% of Ontario respondents and less than 40% of Franco-Ontarians report that they are taking a course or have signed up for one. Among Ontario-wide respondents, the 30% level of activity is maintained by 20 and 21 year olds and then drops off sharply. Among Franco-Ontarians, because the sample size is smaller, the percentages tend to be more erratic, and no clear pattern after age 19 is evident other than the fact that only a small minority continue with any kind of education.

Not surprisingly, among 18 and 19 year old respondents, high school courses are the most frequently mentioned, and one-fifth of this age group in both samples report that they were taking high school courses. As the age of the respondent increases, there is a movement to other types of courses, typically vocational and some university, but with courses as likely, and for some age groups more likely, to be part-time as full-time.

Table 32

AGE OF THOSE CURRENTLY TAKING OR SIGNED UP FOR COURSES AND TYPE OF COURSES

ONTARIO-WIDE

AGE	Full-Time High School %	Part-Time High School %	Full-Time Other %	Part-Time Other %	Not Attending/ Not Signed Up %
18-19 years	15	3	7	2	73
20-21 years	5	2	5	17	72
22-24 years	2	0	8	8	81
25-27 years	1	0	3	4	92
28-30 years	1	0	1	5	92

FRANCO-ONTARIANS

AGE	Full-Time High School %	Part-Time High School %	Full-Time Other %	Part-Time Other %	Not Attending/ Not Signed Up %
18-19 years*	8	15	15	0	62
20-21 years	0	4	8	4	84
22-24 years	6	6	0	11	78
25-27 years	0	5	4	5	86
28-30 years	0	1	1	6	91

* Sample size is too small to be reliable.

D. Interest in Further Education

Table 33 shows that over one-third of Ontario and Franco-Ontarian respondents report that they had a great deal of interest in furthering their education. Including those who say they have some interest, close to eight in ten Ontario respondents and two-thirds of the Franco-Ontarian respondents report that they have an interest in furthering their education. When gender differences are considered, women in the Ontario sample are somewhat more likely than men (47% compared to 36% saying they have a great deal of interest) to want to pursue their education. No gender differences are apparent in the Franco-Ontarian sample.

Table 33

INTEREST IN FURTHERING EDUCATION

LEVEL OF INTEREST	ONTARIO-WIDE %	FRANCO-ONTARIANS %
A great deal	41	36
Some	38	32
Not too much	9	16
None at all	12	16

Perhaps not surprisingly, younger people are more likely to say they have an interest in pursuing their education further, but there is also fairly strong interest even among the older age groups. Among Ontarians overall, while 54% of those 18 and 19 years of age say they have "a great deal" of interest in furthering their education, from ages 28 to 30 interest is still high, with 33% saying they have "a great deal" of interest. Very different results are obtained from the Franco-Ontarian sample; there is no strong age relationship in interest in pursuing an education. It remains strong into the late twenties.

Some experience in pursuing an education appears to be a fairly strong ingredient in stimulating the desire to further education. Those who say they have already taken some courses or programs since dropping out are much more likely than those who have not to say that they have a great deal of interest in furthering their education. Among both the

Ontario-wide and Franco-Ontarian sample, 52% and 50%, respectively, of those who have taken some courses express "a great deal" of interest in furthering their education. This compares with only 24% and 20% in those groups, respectively, who say they have "a great deal" of interest and have, up to the time of the survey, not had any educational experiences since dropping out. Much the same relationship holds for those who report that they have gone on to complete high school compared with those who have not.

There are three main courses of study that respondents would most like to undertake. As Table 34 notes, these are completing high school, attending college and attending a trade school of some kind. Males and females differ somewhat in the type of program they would like to undertake. Among males, trade school (34% - Ontario sample, 38% - Franco-Ontarian sample) tends to be most frequently mentioned, while among females completing high school (36% - Ontario sample, 35% - Franco-Ontarian sample) and attending college (34% - Ontario sample, 30% - Franco-Ontarian sample) tend to be more frequently cited. Interestingly, when the age of respondent is considered, aside from younger people being more likely to mention completing high school as their educational objective, interest in all three types of programs remains strong across all the age groups. Thus, among those aged between 28 and 30 years, close to a third of the Ontario-wide and Franco-Ontarian samples report that they would like to complete high school.

Table 34

COURSE OF STUDY MOST INTERESTED IN

	ONTARIO-WIDE %	FRANCO-ONTARIANS %
Completing high school	30	28
Attending college	28	27
Attending trade school	24	28
Attending university	10	13
Other	7	3

E. Reasons For Not Completing Education

Respondents offer a wide variety of reasons for not completing their education, despite their high interest, and no one reason dominates. The most frequently cited reason as shown in Table 35 is that there has not been enough time. Other common reasons cited include: a perceived lack of need for any more education; a respondent had a job and therefore did not consider further education to be needed; or family reasons, including caring for young children, preventing a person pursuing further education.

Table 35

REASON FOR NOT COMPLETING EDUCATION

	ONTARIO-WIDE %	FRANCO-ONTARIANS %
Not had enough time	29	24
Didn't need any more education	17	8
Got a job	10	12
Not enough money	12	10
No interest/don't like studying/	8	12
Family problems/raising children/ marriage/pregnancy	9	10
Did complete/still in school	4	1
Other	6	7
No opinion	4	16

F. Consequences of Dropping Out on Educational Attainment

In an earlier section of this report, it was noted that drop-outs from secondary school, although they are in the labour force, are infrequently found in professional and technical occupations, and managerial positions. There is an obvious reason for this in terms of the limited further educational experiences of drop-outs that this chapter has documented.

As a way of summarizing the impact of dropping out on later educational attainment, Table 36 compares drop-outs and non drop-outs in terms of the highest level of education that each group has completed. The most dramatic impact of dropping out, as Table 36 makes clear, is that two-thirds of Ontario drop-outs, and somewhat more among Franco-Ontarians, have not completed high school. (This may change slightly, given that some drop-outs were registered in courses to complete high school and that some of the younger drop-outs may yet enter such programs. The change in the proportion not completing high school arising from these factors is, however, likely to be minimal.)

A second notable consequence is the much smaller number of drop-outs who have completed technical, vocational, or college programs compared to non drop-outs. A third consequence is the minute number of drop-outs, less than 5%, who have some university experience, compared with the one-third of non drop-outs across the province who do.

Table 36

HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %
Did not complete high school	66	0	71	0
Completed high school only	8	27	6	30
Technical/vocational/college	22	40	21	42
Some university	3	15	1	12
University degree	1	18	1	16

Given the strong links between educational attainment and upper level white collar positions, the great majority of students who drop out even though they may plan to return later have effectively blocked their opportunities to reach these types of positions. This is not to say that drop-outs do not achieve success in their occupational fields. The discussion earlier in the report relating to income and occupation indicated that at lower level positions, drop-outs and non drop-outs apparently earn fairly similar incomes. This finding was, however, not definitive because the cell size involved tends to be small.

VIII. NON DROP-OUTS

Although drop-outs by definition left secondary school at least temporarily prior to graduating, there is the question of whether non drop-outs ever contemplate leaving school. In other words, are there pressures that all high school students experience that make them contemplate dropping out, or is the thought of dropping out limited to those who actually go on to do it.

When this question was put to non drop-outs, a very small proportion, fewer than one in six, report that they had thought about dropping out. Gender differences are limited, although males in both samples say they were more likely to think about dropping out than females. Less than a third of those contemplating dropping out report that they spoke to a staff member, and when they did speak to someone, it was more often likely to be a guidance counsellor than any other staff member. In contrast to the 32% of Ontario-wide drop-outs who report that the staff member they spoke to tried very hard to get them to change their mind, among non drop-outs, as noted earlier, 67% report that the person they spoke to tried very hard to encourage them to stay.

Table 37

THINKING ABOUT DROPPING OUT AND CONTACT WITH SCHOOL STAFF

	ONTARIO-WIDE	FRANCO-ONTARIANS
Thought about leaving	16	10
Did not think about leaving	84	90
CONTACT WITH STAFF		
Spoke to staff	30	--*
Did not speak to staff	70	--
PERSON SPOKEN WITH		
Guidance counsellor	75	--
Teacher	25	--
EXTENT ENCOURAGED TO STAY		
Very hard	67	--
Somewhat hard	17	--
Not too hard	12	--
Not at all hard	4	--

* Sample sizes are too small to be reliable.

IX. FAMILY STRUCTURE AND FAMILY SUPPORT

The family is the most basic of social units and from many perspectives the most important. Certainly in terms of the kinds of socialization experiences children are exposed to and the kind of environment that a child matures in through the high school years, the family plays a vital role. From the point of view of understanding some of the factors contributing to a young person's decision to drop out, understanding the family situation is an important element.

Some idea of the kind of family life that young people experienced during high school and its possible impact on the decision to drop out can be gathered from the extent to which respondents report that they left home once they left school and the reasons given for leaving home.

Approximately the same proportion of drop-outs and non drop-outs report that they left home once they left high school. This represents about one-third of Ontarians overall and four in ten Franco-Ontarians. Table 38 indicates the precise percentages; however, drop-outs give very different reasons for leaving home than do non drop-outs.

Table 38

LEAVING HOME

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %
AFTER LEFT HIGH SCHOOL				
Left home	38	32	44	42
Stayed at home	61	67	56	57
REASON				
Went to university/got a job out of town	17	72	20	62
Wanted to be on own	35	14	48	26
Poor relationship with parents	26	6	18	1
Got married	11	4	7	7
Other	11	4	7	2

A final measure of the family environment is the kind of interest respondents believe their parents showed in their education during their high school years. Overall, while drop-outs report a somewhat lower level of interest in their education than do non drop-outs, Table 39 shows that a majority of respondents believe their parents showed a great deal of interest in their education. Clearly, while some respondents feel that they did not receive the level of interest they wanted, a lack of family interest is not the major factor influencing dropping out. Obviously, though, and as Table 39 indicates, it is important in a number of cases.

Table 39

LEVEL OF INTEREST OF PARENTS IN RESPONDENTS' EDUCATION

	ONTARIO-WIDE		FRANCO-ONTARIANS	
	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %	Drop-Out %	Non Drop-Out %
A great deal	53	62	59	73
Some	29	26	24	23
Not too much	9	3	12	3
Not at all	8	2	4	1

X. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

A. Summary

High school drop-outs are more likely to come from families with the following characteristics: parents divorced; lower average household incomes; and fathers working in lower level occupations.

A regional analysis shows that high school drop-outs are more prevalent in southwestern and northern Ontario, and in smaller communities. There are fewer drop-outs in larger urban centres such as Toronto, suggesting that there may be a greater recognition by students in these areas of the importance of completing high school.

There are some very clear consequences of dropping out of high school. Drop-outs are more likely to have been unemployed in the past, work in lower level occupations, and earn less income than non drop-outs.

Drop-outs are also more likely to have married at an earlier age, a phenomenon that makes returning to high school to complete their education more difficult.

While all respondents think that an education is important, non drop-outs are more likely to think that it is very important, a view that is more prevalent among men than among women. This same pattern holds in regard to assessments of respondents' own educational experiences.

Dissatisfaction with one's education is mainly tied to recollections about teachers' attitudes toward students and toward their job, and the quality of instruction. The second major factor causing dissatisfaction with one's education has to do with the type and range of courses available, as well as the subject matter that was being taught at the time the student dropped out.

While type of school attended (i.e. public, private, or separate) does not seem to be a substantial factor in terms of whether one dropped out of school, the type of courses taken is linked to dropping out. Those who were enrolled in general or basic courses as opposed to the advanced courses are much more likely to have been high school drop-outs. Grade point average is also a significant factor. Those reporting lower average grades tend to be more likely to drop out.

The data suggest that a mismatch between age and grade may not become a critical issue affecting decisions to drop out until one reaches 18 years of age and students question whether they can, in fact, complete high school.

The major reasons for dropping out of high school are a desire to get a job, problems relating to school itself (e.g. boredom, teachers), and personal problems (e.g. family problems, marriage, and pregnancy). The data also suggest that the desire to begin working may be the single biggest reason for dropping out, and that the decision to leave school for this reason is much easier if the person already has a job to go to -- for example, a summer or part-time job. It appears likely, however, that the desire to get into the labour force is predicated on negative feelings regarding the school system.

Most drop-outs say that there was nothing at the time that could have persuaded them to stay in school. Moreover, a majority report that they did not speak to anyone at the school about their plans to drop out, nor did many think that teachers cared about their leaving.

Among those who say that they may have been persuaded to stay in school, dealing with school related problems is cited most frequently, while changes to the course curriculum and teacher/student relations are most frequently mentioned as the areas where improvements are needed.

A slim majority of drop-outs report that, at the time they left, they intended to return to high school. The data clearly show, however, that unless they return shortly after dropping out, most do not complete their high school education. Notwithstanding this, a majority do pursue some other form of education at a later point in life -- technical or vocational training, in particular, as well as some high school courses -- but few complete any course of study.

There are a variety of reasons for not completing their education. Foremost, though, is a lack of time. Other reasons for not returning include the perception that more education is unnecessary, that they have a job, and that they lack the money to do so. Implicit in the findings is that most drop-outs, for one reason or another, lack the opportunity to complete their education; only a minority appear to be of the opinion that finishing their education is unnecessary.

B. Discussion

These data raise a number of questions. First, although drop-outs earn less income, have a higher rate of unemployment, are more likely to report being unemployed in the past and are unemployed for a longer period of time, they are at the same time certainly not doing badly. This may change over time, of course. As they age, income and labour force differences between the two groups may diverge considerably. Given this finding for those in their twenties, a major question that research cannot answer is that of whether the differences found in this study constitute an acceptable situation.

There are a number of reasons for believing it might not be. Ontario is currently enjoying low unemployment rates compared to the rest of the country. During the next recession it is likely to be drop-outs who are hardest hit. The debate over the need for a more skilled labour force to help make the country more competitive internationally also suggests that a high proportion of drop-outs is not consistent with the goal of a competitive, skilled, and productive labour force. At the same time, it is a cherished goal of the education system to give citizens the tools to compete on an equal footing in the labour market. Clearly, a drop-out is not in a position to compete fairly. A further factor increasing the importance of the drop-out problem is that it can also undermine efforts to improve the situation of women in Canadian society. Female drop-outs are much more likely than non drop-outs to be in occupations that could be characterized as constituting the female job ghetto. Given these arguments, then, the drop-out problem is one that should be dealt with.

The overall conclusion of this study is that some amount of dropping out may be prevented. While a certain percentage of high school students drop out because of family or personal problems -- circumstances over which the school and teachers may have little influence -- the majority leave because of problems in the school or because or their desire to get out into the "real world" and earn a living.

The data are very clear on what should not be done. To simply allow students to drop out in the expectation that most of them will eventually return to high school is clearly a false assumption. The prevention of dropping out is the only way of ensuring that students will, in fact, complete high school. This means that greater effort needs to be put into programs that can help prevent dropping out.

In examining the data on reasons for dropping out, it is clear that while many students want to get into the labour force, this often appears to be a way of escaping from the school system. Students complain of being bored, and of courses not being relevant or interesting. This suggests that one starting point is to make courses more attractive and interesting to students. This does not mean that more choices need to be offered, but that courses must be made so that they are relevant to students.

Related to these comments is the possibility that students may question the rationale for some of the courses taught in school and how these courses will help them in later life. This may be one of the reasons such a significant number choose to join the workforce: a failure to see the relevance of what is being taught in school. Perhaps what is needed is that at the beginning of their high school career and throughout, students must develop an appreciation for why certain programs such as math and science are important.

The higher drop-out rate among those with lower grade point averages and those in general and basic courses suggests that students in these situations should be given special attention in terms of ensuring that they are appropriately motivated. At the same time, programs that seek to identify potential drop-outs and then provide them with additional support and services could also be introduced.

The general complaint about teachers appearing to show little interest in the subjects being taught and not communicating effectively with potential drop-outs suggests that teachers could be encouraged and possibly be given time off to improve their teaching style and approach in the classroom.

Also important is to anticipate and to address early in high school, students' desire for material things and independence, and their apparent observation that leaving school, moving out of the house, and getting a job is the quickest means of satisfying these desires. Young people, particularly those who are susceptible to dropping out, need to be made more aware that while these urges are normal, there are serious implications and drawbacks to leaving school that may place permanent limitations on their future, particularly as it relates to their working career. Students must be helped to think ideas through and plan on a long-term basis, and to not seek short-term solutions to problems and urges which they may currently face.

Having a job also appears to be a major component in the decision to leave school. While it is probably not possible or desirable to prevent high school students from taking part-time jobs, it is possible to work more effectively in communicating to students the importance of completing high school, and warn them more strongly about the "dead end" nature of part-time jobs.

The fact that most drop-outs seem strongly committed to leaving school suggests the depths of the alienation from the education process. This alienation is clearly something that does not appear overnight, but probably festers for many years. Initiatives and programs designed to limit dropping out must begin early in the high school years.

In addition to drop-outs reporting that classes were boring, the large minority who indicate that the fact that they skipped classes was an important factor in their dropping out suggests that special emphasis should be placed on ensuring that students do not have as many opportunities to skip classes.

The small number of drop-outs who contacted a high school staff member, while it confirms that many students did not want to be "talked out" of dropping out, also attests to the limited amount of trust that drop-outs seem to have in the staff at high schools. This may not be a problem with the staff themselves, but with the fact that staff only have a limited amount of time and are likely to "pick the winners" rather than the loser in terms of to whom they pay most attention. Greater resources directed to potential drop-outs may be one way of fostering a closer relationship with the school staff.

The limited extent to which drop-outs report that principals and vice-principals encouraged them to stay in school suggests, if the responses of drop-outs can be taken at face value, that these staff members offer very little encouragement to drop-outs.

Finally, given the strong interest in further education on the part of drop-outs -- even those in their late twenties -- education programs and communications strategies can perhaps be developed to reach and encourage drop-outs to take part in adult education programs.